

# Presuppositional Patterns: A Biblical Study of the Unmarried Woman's Role

## By Natalie Wickham – July, 2006

### INTRO

Let me say one thing before I jump into the topic at hand. This area I'm addressing is one in which I've swung from one extreme to another. I've found myself influenced over the years by those on opposite ends of the spectrum and have subscribed to different views at different times. Only recently have I approached Scripture with this specific area in mind and with a desire to understand the Lord's heart on it. What a blessing this study has been! The Word of God never ceases to change me – to transform my thinking and to alter my lifestyle. Though I am sharing what I have learned from my own study of Scripture, there is nothing that can replace personal study. I challenge each reader to spend time for themselves seeking the Lord's heart on this issue, as expressed in the pages of Scripture; time thus spent will render blessings beyond those from reading these writings of mine.

### PART ONE

The question has been posed, "Should girls go to college?" From the emphatic "no!" to the incredulity that such a question could even produce a negative answer, the responses to be given are as diverse as the experiences of those who give them. Ah yes...experiences. Though they teach us much about life, experiences cannot be the standard by which we measure the validity of a pressing decision or the acceptability of a particular situation. You see, two people encountering the same situation may experience entirely opposite results. For one, it may provide a good experience, while for another, it provides a bad experience. Two things, based upon the same standard of measurement, that are antithetical to one another cannot both be right. (Unless, of course, one subscribes to a relativistic view whereby each one determines for himself what is right depending upon the present situation. In which case, it would be pointless for us to have this discussion in the first place...)

The first step in answering the afore-mentioned question is to acknowledge that God's Word is the absolute standard by which we must measure every situation and every decision. God has no intention of leaving us on our own to make such crucial and life-impacting decisions as whether or not to attend college. On the contrary, Scripture speaks to every area of life and God promises to bless those who walk in His ways.

*"Blessed is everyone that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways."*

Psalms 128:1

*"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways."*

Psalms 119:1-3

Let us commit ourselves, then, to seeking the Lord's way with our whole heart and determining to walk in it, wherever the path may lead!

There is certainly more than one direction we could take in approaching a study of Scripture with the question, "Should girls go to college?" in mind. As I pondered the question, though, I found myself wondering what God's role is for young women who are beyond their childhood years but have not yet entered into marriage. Before we can even answer the specific question of college, we must lay a framework with a clear understanding of God's general role for such a woman. This will be the foundation, then, upon which every other decision can be built. I invite you to join me as we explore an even more foundational question, "*What's an unmarried woman to do?*"

## **PART TWO**

The young woman carefully folded another shirt and placed it in the open suitcase. As she did so, the brightly-colored fabric of another shirt caught her eye. She eased it out from its sandwiched position and held it up for reconsideration. Did she really need it? She had to admit, it didn't seem quite as necessary now as when she had packed it a year ago. After a moment of intense internal debate, she folded it up and placed it back in the suitcase. After all, she might need it once she got there. There. She didn't know exactly where "there" was; nevertheless, there was no telling what she might need once she got...there. Might as well pack it all. She wanted everything to be just perfect when the time came. She glanced at the four other suitcases surrounding her and carefully went back through each one, inspecting its contents and rearranging it until it satisfied her. She had spent countless hours acquiring, packing and rearranging the items in each suitcase. As she closed the last suitcase, she emitted a hopeful sigh. She'd been at this packing business for many years and she was ready. The exciting possibilities raced through her mind again. She could hardly wait! Someday – perhaps someday soon – she would finally get to go...there.

A look in the opposite direction illuminated another young woman as she hurried out the door. A moment later she reappeared – only to grab a handful of forgotten items before disappearing once again, leaving behind only the echo of the door as it slammed shut behind her. Later that night, her steps were considerably slower as she wearily reentered the room and collapsed in exhaustion onto her bed. Her room was in disarray, and her thoughts were ten times more so as she drifted off to sleep. She didn't even notice as her dangling arm brushed across the thick layer of dust coating the top of her suitcase that had long ago been shoved out of sight under her bed. Perhaps she would need it someday, but there was no use worrying about it now. She was just too busy for that kind of thing.

One final gaze fixed itself upon a third young woman as she picked up a few odds and ends that had gotten out of place in her otherwise tidy area. As she returned them to their rightful spot, her eyes fell on the suitcase sitting inconspicuously toward the side of the room. A thought occurred to her and she quickly jotted it down on the travel checklist she kept handily stored in a drawer on her desk. As she looked over the growing list, she smiled contentedly and with a twinge of anticipation. She wanted to be ready for her trip – whenever the day should happen to arrive. But until then, she had plenty of other things to occupy her time and energy. She must remain focused and faithful in what she had been called to do for the present time. With that thought on her mind, she replaced the list, gathered the necessary items and left the room, carefully closing the door behind her as she set about to carry on the duties of the day.

An imperfect analogy, to be sure, but this is the scenario that came to mind as I contemplated the life of the unmarried woman. (The anticipated trip represents the probable future marriage and the suitcase and its contents represent the responsibilities of a married woman.) There is certainly no want of advice for such a woman: "Make a difference in the world while you're single." "Pursue your dreams." "You must go to college if you want to be successful in life." "Focus on learning to be a keeper at home." "Find a ministry opportunity where you can serve others." "Get a good job so you can support yourself." "You always need something you can fall back on...just in case."

How is one to sift through such conflicting messages as they are issued from every side? Which way is the right way? *What's an unmarried woman to do?*

## **PART THREE**

*What's an unmarried woman to do?* With this question at the forefront of my mind, my search for an answer began in the pages of Scripture. What does God have to say about unmarried? (Can that please be a word? If you will so humor me, for the sake of this series "unmarried" will be defined as the state prior to entering a marriage covenant but beyond the time when a young woman is considered a child.) You know what I found? Almost every passage addressed to women is addressing *married* women. Profound, I know. Seriously, though, I think this is quite significant. This reaffirms an important truth: marriage is normative. It is God's design for

women to marry. God specifically created woman (Eve) to be married to man (Adam). This was God's design from the beginning. Teachings and examples throughout Scripture reinforce this truth.

This understanding leads some to advocate that every *unmarried* woman should devote her time and energy to preparing to be a *married* woman. They apply the principles of being a Godly wife also to the time that an unmarried woman still lives in her father's house. Believing the end goal to be marriage, this time of unmarried is spent primarily, or even exclusively, developing those areas deemed necessary for her future role as a wife, mother and homemaker.

This is akin to the young woman who spent years consumed by her preparations for a trip she assumed she would take, but didn't know when or to what locale. How can an unmarried woman possibly know how to prepare for marriage to a man yet unknown at a time yet undetermined? For, while it is *normative* that a woman will marry, it is not *certain*. And there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the particular details of each marriage. Perhaps her husband will desire or prefer that she run the household a certain way. Will she be so set in her own ways that she will find such adaptability difficult? Perhaps her husband will have certain dietary restrictions. Will her training in the kitchen have been for naught? Perhaps her husband will have a physical disability. Will her expectations be crushed? Perhaps the long-awaited husband will die unexpectedly after only a short time of marriage. What will the young widow do then? (I am in no way advocating that young women should not serve their families in the running of the household or in assisting with meal preparation, etc., I am merely questioning the teaching that this should be done to the exclusion of all else in an effort to prepare for a future marriage.)

Is it possible, then, for an unmarried woman to be adequately prepared for marriage? Indeed! Not only is it possible, it is essential. But I would submit to you that the best preparation is not necessarily that which requires the *unmarried* woman to assume the responsibilities set forth for a *married* woman.

Astute observers will quickly agree that our society advocates a completely different approach to the question, "*What's an unmarried woman to do?*" With disregard for God's unique design of the sexes, young women are encouraged to pursue the same course as their male counterparts. (Which course, even when pursued by young men, is itself debatable in light of what Scripture teaches.) Namely, complete twelve years of primary education, attend college and complete at least one degree, enter the workforce and climb the corporate ladder, earn enough money so you can live comfortably and spend your latter days basking in the return from your gilded retirement nest egg. Somewhere along the way she may meet the man of her dreams and fall in love, at which point she may choose to get married. Following the honeymoon, life will carry on "as it were," each pursuing their own ambitions and with household duties now equally divided between both parties. Should children be deemed desirable at some point, the socially preferred one boy and one girl will be attempted for and, barring complications, will be added to the family picture for the duration of their first 18 years of life, excepting, of course, the 25,000+ hours they will spend in daycares and educational institutions outside the home. Meanwhile, the career-driven woman will spend her days running the proverbial "rat race," a continuation of all the goals and dreams she set out to reach as a young unmarried woman.

This is analogous to the weary woman who ran herself ragged in the busy activity of life, never giving thought to the future responsibilities of marriage, let alone preparing for such. Without any consideration for the teaching of Scripture, she merely set out to follow the course commonly practiced and encouraged by our present society. Independence is supreme. Though the woman gets married, it is little more than a social nicety. She continues to pursue her own goals and interests while her husband pursues his. Indeed, her total lack of thought and preparation prepared her perfectly for everything a marriage should not be.

#### **PART FOUR**

Thus, the question set forth has yet to be answered, "*What's an unmarried woman to do?*" There is only one place where the Bible specifically addresses the situation of the unmarried woman in contrast to that of the

married woman. We would do well to carefully consider the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:34-35, “*There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*” (emphasis added)

Paul identifies a deliberate distinction between the focus and duty of the unmarried woman and that of the married woman. It was enlightening to discover that the words “*difference*” and “*careth*” come from the same Greek root. It is as though Paul was categorically separating the married from the unmarried by defining their unique roles. In other words, God has not equally bestowed the same roles and responsibilities upon all women, regardless of their matrimonial state. Married women have specific roles and responsibilities *because* they are married. Unmarried women have specific roles and responsibilities *because* they are unmarried.

This Biblical distinction is the premise upon which an unmarried woman should evaluate and base her decisions. Her primary focus must be on “*the things of the Lord.*” This primary focus will lead her to live a life of holiness in body and in spirit because she is seeking to serve and please the Lord in whatever endeavor He may lead her. If her primary focus is on preparing for a husband, she will become discontent with being unmarried, which Paul proscribes – he wants the unmarried woman free from the expectations and duties of those who are married, so that she may “*attend upon the Lord without distraction.*”

Here is the crux of the issue – our Sovereign God alone knows what the future holds. Therefore, He alone is uniquely able to prepare an unmarried woman for what her future holds. Rather than dogmatically insisting that an unmarried woman should only be engaged in certain pursuits, young women should be encouraged to pursue “*the things of the Lord,*” recognizing that this will mean a different direction for different women – based, not upon her own desires or the changing philosophies of the world, but upon the personal leading of the Lord in her life as He molds her into the godly woman that He desires. In addition to her own study of Scripture and prayerful consideration, a young woman must not overlook the vital role of her parents in directing her decisions. The Lord has placed them in her life to give counsel and direction. Honoring and obeying them is a key ingredient in a life that is pleasing to the Lord. If she rejects their counsel and direction, then she has cut herself off from the light that would otherwise illuminate the way set before her by the Lord. “*My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*” (Proverbs 6:20-23)

This unmarried woman can be related to the young woman who was mindful of the probability of a future trip and made notes in preparation for such. It would be wise for an unmarried woman to carefully observe the examples – both positive and negative – of those around her and learn from them. This principle is vividly portrayed in Proverbs 24:32. After observing the field of the slothful and its state of disrepair, the writer notes, “*Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.*” Many little nuggets of wisdom can be gleaned by carefully observing the lives of others and viewing them in light of Scripture. [As an aside, I have found it helpful to keep a small journal in which I record specific principles and ideas that I’ve gleaned from observing others in situations in which I anticipate that I might find myself at some point in the future – from courtship to marriage to parenting, etc.]

Incidentally, I believe that these same principles apply to the life of the unmarried man. (1 Corinthians 7:32-33) As both the man and woman that God has intended for each other focus on “*the things of the Lord,*” He will allow their paths to cross once He has finished preparing them for the life they will live together as husband and wife. Of course, His sanctifying work will continue throughout the remainder of their life, but they will have received the necessary preparation for the husband to serve as the leader of the home, casting the vision for the

family, and the wife to be his helpmeet, using the specific areas developed by God during her unmarried years to come alongside her husband supporting and carrying out the vision God has given him.

## **PART FIVE**

Now that we have discovered that the primary role of an unmarried woman is to care for “*the things of the Lord*,” it would behoove us to understand what those “*things*” are. There are two examples given in Scripture that especially give light to the meaning of this phrase. The first is found in a brief exchange between Jesus and Martha in her house.

*“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But only one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”* Luke 10:38-42

It’s not that it’s wrong to be hospitable and to serve your guests. It’s just that that was not what Jesus wanted Martha to be doing with her time right then. It is fascinating to note that the Greek word for “*distraction*” is the same one Paul used with the negative participle in 1 Corinthians 7 when he said he spoke these words so that the unmarried might “*attend upon the Lord without distraction*.” (emphasis mine) Additionally, the word “*careful*” that Jesus used is rooted in the same Greek word as Paul used when he discussed what things the married and the unmarried “*careth*” for. Martha was distracted from attending upon the Lord because she was caring for other responsibilities. Mary, on the other hand, had her focus right. She “*sat at Jesus’ feet and heard his word*.” Though we do not know for sure whether Mary was married or not, the example she provides perfectly fleshes out the teaching of Paul in 1 Corinthians.

The Lord has provided the time of unmarriage for young people so that they can sit at Jesus’ feet and hear His Word. He knows that there will come a time once they are married when they will not have the freedom to devote the same amount of time to such intense study and undivided focus. It will be their responsibility to care for the things of the world – how they may please their husband or wife, and eventually, their growing family. However, a foundation will have been laid during their unmarried years to adequately prepare them for this change in role and responsibility. We do ourselves and our future marriages a great disservice if we squander our time of unmarriage in ways that distract us from caring for “*the things of the Lord*.”

The second example is found in Acts 18:24-25, the only other place in the Bible where the exact phrase, “*the things of the Lord*” is used.

*“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the LORD; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently **the things of the LORD**, knowing only the baptism of John.”* [emphasis mine]

It was obviously the Scriptures that were the source of Apollos’ teachings. The word “*mighty*,” upon closer inspection, seems to indicate that the Scriptures were rooted within him as a source of power. He was not merely passing on second-hand information. He knew the Scriptures by heart. No doubt, this is why he was able to quickly transition to preaching Christ as the fulfillment of Scriptural prophecies when he was further instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. He was a humble student of the Scriptures and a very effective teacher of truth.

“*The things of the Lord*,” then, are to be found in the Word of God, the written pages of Scripture, and the Person of Jesus Christ (“the Word made flesh”), as we sit at His feet and spend time with Him. Since we have seen that the responsibility of an unmarried woman is to care for “*the things of the Lord*,” every decision she

makes must be considered in light of whether it will assist her in fulfilling this responsibility or distract her from it.

## **PART SIX**

Based upon what we have discovered in our study thus far, we can say that the primary focus of an unmarried woman should be to “Grow in her knowledge and understanding of Scripture and in her relationship with Jesus Christ.” This principle is consistent with the rest of Scripture, which teaches that true success is found in delighting in, meditating upon, and obeying the Word of God.

*“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”* Joshua 1:8

*“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”* Psalm 1:1-3

*“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*  
Matthew 6:33

This priority of the Word of God can be effectively developed in the life of an unmarried woman and will serve as a solid foundation for the years and responsibilities to come. The more she has the Word of God engrafted into her heart, the more its transforming power will be reflected in her life. Her decisions and choice of activities will be influenced not as much by her own desires, but more and more by the wisdom and ways of God as it envelopes her mind and becomes the expression of her heart’s desire. How can this become a reality?

According to Proverbs 3:3, we have the capacity to write things upon our heart. *“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.”* How does one write upon their heart? We receive information through our senses, through what we see/read, hear, smell, etc. We are all familiar with the phrase, “know it by heart.” When something is known by heart, it is no longer necessary to receive the input from an outside source. It has been received and written upon the heart and can be recalled from the memory within. This is why it is so critical to guard ourselves from input that is contrary to God’s Word and to fill our heart instead with what is true and pure. Of course, we cannot isolate ourselves from the world in which we live and there will be many times where we will be subjected to input that is contrary to God’s Word. That is why we should be *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 10:5)

A greater danger exists when we willfully subject ourselves to vast amounts of input that is contrary to God’s Word. Whether it is done in the name of entertainment (such as watching movies) or attaining higher education (such as attending college) or out of some fabricated sense of deserving personal pleasure (such as reading Christian romance novels), a young woman runs the serious risk of allowing the subtle philosophies of her enemy, the devil, who *“as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,”* (1 Peter 5:8b) to slip past her overloaded mind to become lodged within the depths of her heart. Instead, she ought to *“Be sober, be vigilant.”* (1 Peter 5:8a) She cannot afford to let her guard down even for a moment! She must choose, rather, to meditate on the Word of the Lord day and night – to read it, to study it, to memorize it, to ponder it – for this, above all, is what God desires from her. Only then will she be ready to answer the question, *“Should I go to college?”*

## **PART SEVEN**

We have spent a great deal of time and study to finally arrive back at the question from whence we began, “Should girls go to college?” This is an excellent question to ask, and I believe that with the foundation laid thus far, every girl will be able to carefully consider her answer to this question. Based on what we have seen from Scripture, there are several insightful questions that can be asked to arrive at an answer:

1. Is attending college the best way for me to fulfill my primary God-given responsibility of growing in my knowledge and understanding of Scripture and in my relationship with Jesus Christ?
2. Is attending college the best way for me to develop a “whole heart” for God while guarding my heart from unnecessary input that is contrary to God’s Word?
3. Does attending college line up with what God has done in my life up to this point and follow the path that He seems to be setting out for me in preparation for my future?
4. Do my parents believe that it is God’s will for me to attend college?
5. Will college provide the education necessary for me to serve God in the capacity He is leading me? Is it necessary to pursue a degree program or would it be better to just take select classes that will assist me in developing the skills and interests the Lord has given me?
6. What opportunities for ministry or service or skill development are available if I do not attend college? Will these opportunities better enable me to seek and serve God than if I attend college?

There is only one valid reason that a young woman should attend college. And it has nothing to do with getting an education. Nothing to do with getting a good job. Nothing to do with making more money. Indeed, the only reason she should attend college is if God makes it clear that by so doing she will be able to most effectively grow in her knowledge and understanding of Scripture and in her relationship with Jesus Christ. For, if this is her first priority, God has promised to meet all of her physical needs, (see Matthew 6:33) and to direct her paths, (see Proverbs 3:5-6) which would include preparing her to be a helpmeet to her future husband. Because God has specifically placed her parents in her life to give her direction, a young woman should readily accept and heed her parents’ counsel when deciding whether or not to attend college. God may lay His will upon their heart for reasons that even they do not know, but which, when followed, will provide the light that the young woman needs in order to walk in His ways. Whether in spite of their counsel, or in the absence of their counsel, if an unmarried woman chooses to attend college when it is not God’s will, she is treading a slippery slope that will quickly lead to her destruction. In contrast, the woman who ponders the path of her feet and walks in the way God makes known to her will receive blessings from Him beyond her greatest expectation!

## **PART EIGHT**

To some of my readers, the principles and ideas I have presented will seem both idealistic and unrealistic. But let me assure you – God’s way *does* work! Sadly, I have seen the negative effect the failure to live by these principles has produced as close friends have exchanged their “first love” for the pursuit of worldly pleasures and philosophies. But I have also seen the rich rewards God has bestowed upon young women who have faithfully sought Him and made it their first priority to grow in their knowledge and understanding of Scripture and in their relationship with Jesus Christ. With their permission, I would like to share just a couple of these examples.

The first is the example of my dear sister, Nicole. From the time we were little, Nicole and Nadine (our third sister) and I had given up traditional toys in favor of running our own “businesses.” We owned every business our young minds could imagine, and eventually stuck with a travel agency. We ordered travel magazines from every state and several foreign countries and filed them alphabetically in file cabinets procured for this purpose. We dealt with “customers” all day long, typed up itineraries and forms on our old MS-DOS computer, and spent the summer scouring garage sales for anything that could be put to use in our office. By far, the crowning moment was when I spotted it – a credit card machine. You know, the old kind where you placed the credit card on the metal plate with the carbon receipt over top of it and had to slide the top part of the machine over it to impress the credit card information on the receipt? We could hardly contain our excitement and were sure we had reached the pinnacle of life in the business world as we eagerly handed our find to the seller, who

questioned us several times to be sure that we knew what we were buying. We convinced her that we knew what we were doing and sped home on our bikes, more eager than ever to conduct all the transactions required in our booming little business. Little did we realize how even during those carefree days of childhood play, the Lord was preparing us for what the future would hold. ☺

For several years, once we were older, Nicole and I traveled to various cities in the Midwest to receive training and to teach groups of children while their parents attended a seminar. Though at times the differences in our personalities were the source of numerous irritations, we learned to work together as a team. We learned to value each others' strengths and I learned much from her amazing organizational skills and serving spirit. She later went on to attend several workshops in areas of interest to her – floral arranging and interior design, in particular. She then spent some time working locally for an Interior Designer, and later for a Florist, learning valuable skills that she has used in numerous ways to benefit our family and others – helping with home décor ideas, providing beautiful inexpensive floral arrangements for weddings, etc.

Nicole worked as an Office Manager for several years at GraceWorks, helping keep things organized, talking with customers (many homeschool Moms from whom she gained valuable insight), and expanding her computer skills. From there, the Lord led her to work as the Office Manager for some friends as they started a new furniture business. She amazes everyone with her ability to keep track of incredible amounts of detailed information and efficiently handle business issues while calmly and politely dealing with customers in person and over the phone.

In November of 2004, God laid it on the heart of a young man to call my Dad and ask for permission to court Nicole. Unbeknownst to us, he had been seriously interested in Nicole since that Spring but had been praying and waiting on the Lord for the right time to pursue the relationship. Although we saw afterward how the Lord had prepared Nicole for this change that would be taking place in her life, at the time it was completely unexpected. Nicole and Andy were married in August of 2005 and she has used the skills she developed in her 23 unmarried years to decorate an adorable home for herself and Andy. She is an immaculate housekeeper and has used the combination of her organizational and computer spreadsheet skills to develop a meal-planning program that allows her to select specific meals from a list she created of their favorite meals and add them to the menu for the week. A shopping list is automatically generated from the list and she prints it out, goes through the cupboards and checks off items they already have and then does her bi-weekly grocery shopping from the remainder of the list. All this from the girl who hadn't grocery shopped since we were little girls being dragged through the store with Mom and whose repertoire of meals included macaroni and cheese, ramen noodles, and grilled cheese sandwiches.

You see, God knew exactly how to prepare Nicole for her role as a wife and homemaker. She faithfully sought the Lord while she was unmarried and used the skills He gave her to serve Him and invest in others and He molded her into the wife that Andy needed to be his helpmeet.

## **PART NINE**

Julia and I were kindred spirits from the start. Both endowed with the gift of exhortation, we spent our time together as young girls dreaming up ideas and making plans for how we could teach others and share with them the things of the Lord. At long last our plans came to fruition. In the Spring of 1998, we made plans for a summer Bible Club, wrote a curriculum, designed and delivered flyers throughout the neighborhood, recruited friends to teach the groups of children, tell stories, accompany the singing, organize games and meals, and then prayed for God's blessing on our little program, which we named, "Adventures In Character." The Lord answered our prayers beyond what we could have ever expected and expanded the program the following year into a larger-scale program which continues to this day.

Julia, whose father died when she was still a young girl, has long been an inspiration to me with her love for the Lord and her devotion to prayer. She often asked me for prayer requests and faithfully prayed over them,



checking in with me for updates on a regular basis. Julia's heart for others, especially for those not readily accepted by others, has led her to take an interest in the lives of many younger girls and mentor and encourage them in their walk with the Lord. There is no telling how many lives have been forever changed because of the investments she has made.

For as long as I can remember, Julia had a certain computer-geekishness about her and didn't hesitate to delve into solving computer problems or even learning programming languages. Eventually, she developed an interest in film technology and took advantage of an opportunity to study as an apprentice in the video department of the IBLP Headquarters in Illinois. She became quite good at video production and put to use her excellent writing skills and creative inspiration to help write scripts and narration, and design storyboards. She was hired on at the video department and continued her work there, working on a variety of different projects throughout the years. Over time, one of the supervisors in the video department realized that Julia was the one that God had prepared for him to marry. Just before their Christmas break in December of 2003, Daniel called Julia's Mom and requested permission to court her. Julia, who had likewise grown to love Daniel, upon reaching home and receiving the news from her Mom, consented to the courtship. They were married in May of 2004 and have since founded Eye Reach Productions – a home-based film production company. They work together doing film work for a number of businesses and ministries and look forward to teaching their little daughter and expectant second child the “tools of the trade” so that they can continue to work and serve as a family.

You see, God knew exactly what kind of preparation Julia would need to be Daniel's helpmeet. Because her heart was focused on the Lord during her unmarried years and because Julia faithfully sought the Lord and made knowing and following Him her priority, God was able to provide her with the opportunities to develop the skills He knew she would need.

## **CONCLUSION**

*“Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.” (Deuteronomy 4:39-40)*

The years of unmarried are a unique time, a precious gift from the Lord. Let us, unmarried women, commit ourselves anew to caring for “*the things of the Lord*” – not only for our own well-being, but for the well-being of our future marriages and for the well-being of the generations of children that will come behind us. The future is bright – the promises of God are sure!