

SEASON OF WIFEHOOD



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR WIFEHOOD SEASON Deborah Osinibi

The life of a woman is seasonal, and this affects women who are wives also. As we look at the season of wifehood in this edition, I want to recall what the preacher said in Ecclesiastes 3:3 that *“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”*

A wife who understands this, will make the most of her life season as a wife. And what a great privilege for a young wife and mother to understand this early in her marriage, so that when she finds herself in various seasons, she is able to make the most of it and find productivity through Christ.

In this article, I will focus on the early days of marriage and

motherhood.

The early days of marriage should be a season of knowing each other as you dwell together. As you know that both you and your husband came from different backgrounds and upbringing, it is therefore wise to settle well into your marriage getting to know your husband better as he knows you too.

There might be issues that surprises you about your husband's conduct or mannerism during these early days of marriage, this is not to cause friction and unsettledness in your marriage, rather, this should make you to want to know more about him and how you can fit into his weaknesses and strength

The early days, weeks, months and years of marriage should be a season of building your individual and corporate walk with God. It should also be a time of building godly principles, standards and belief that will govern your home. These principles, standards and belief will become basis for how you spend your money, raise your children, relate with families etc.

One of the principles my husband established in our home at the onset was our time together in the Word. And I can never be grateful enough for this principle that he started our home on, because the spirituality of our homes will be the basis for every principle, standard and

belief that will follow. So, from the very beginning, my husband promoted the need for us to spend time in the Word, pray together, fast and take retreats together. This simple principle pays off many years down the line.

If the early days of marriage is well utilized, a wife might be equipped to face every other season that comes, be it the season of bareness, financial difficulty, job loss, riches, motherhood etc.

Another key component that I want to focus on in making the most of your wifehood season is **the season of motherhood**. This is very pivotal in your marriage journey.

Along the line, God may begin to bring children into your marriage, I will encourage preparing yourself for motherhood ever before marriage or the moment you get married.

Read books, listen to messages on motherhood and parenting in general. Do personal Bible study on motherhood and parenting; look at mothers and parents in the Bible and how they fared in the ministry of motherhood.

If possible attend seminars, workshops and classes on godly parenting, do these with your husband as much as possible.

A lack of understanding of these things has made many young wives not to make the most of their motherhood. Thereby, children born in Christian homes are not well raised and nurtured for the Lord.

To be effective in this, it might be helpful to find an older wife or mother to walk alongside you so that motherhood does not become a threat to your marriage and your walk with God.

Eunice, the mother of Timothy had Lois walked the journey of motherhood with her, and she was able to raise her son, Timothy, in the way and admonition of the Lord even when the father was not a believer.

Therefore, you must know, that there is a purpose of God in every season of a wife's life, it is your responsibility to discover and focus yourself on the Lord, and achieving His purpose for

whatever season you find yourself in your marriage, let no season be wasted.

To close, one thing that I want to leave you with is that no season is forever, season changes, but we have only one Constant, and that is God. Be in close communion with Him as a wife, and He is able to take you through all seasons of your own wifehood.

Managing the season of difficulty in finance.

Lydia Akinola

Are you a wife in financial difficulty? Have you or your husband lost your jobs? You are not alone. A wife may be in a season of famine like we are now across the globe, where the government of many of our nations are in financial difficulties too, so what do we do?

For us as Christians, we have an anchor for our soul, which is Christ. There is hope in our finances with Christ.

Maybe you have been crying, know that God sees and hears your cry, dear sister.

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During our 21-year-old marriage, my husband and I have learnt so much. We both had a perception that our marriage would be so different from our parent's or other family or family friends because we thought we knew what their problems were, and we would avoid them at all costs.

However, the more we try to negate a perceived problem by using someone else's marriage as our navigation or our own ideas of how it should or should not be done, then, we are oversteering into some other rocks along the way, as we will operate in fear of making the same mistakes.

The apostle Paul reminds us that we do not have a spirit of fear but of love, power and a sound mind. However, trouble is a certainty as Jesus forewarned us in John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." So, trouble even in our marriages is unavoidable, as God uses our marriage to incubate purity in our own relationships with Him through the covenant of marriage to each other and to Him.

God tells us in Ecclesiastes 3 that "There is a time for everything, and a season for

every activity under the heavens" and therefore we all experience different seasons in our marriages, and they are not always following on from each other and will reoccur many times during the marriage covenant.

These different seasons are Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer.

In our deepest winter, we had to seek help and a useful book to us have been: The 4 seasons of marriage: Secrets to a lasting marriage by Gary Chapman. The article provides practical information and strategies to manage the conflicts of marriage.

The reason seasons changes in our marriages are not because of the events that occurs, but the way we choose to react because of the changes. We all have the capacity to make choices but remember that your choices have consequences either good or bad, and it will affect the response you get from your spouse, therefore, exercise good manners with your husband in moments of conflicts.

Be considerate - do not take your husband for granted and act in a thoughtless way. Say please and thank you. The golden rule of Matthew 7:12 applies "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. Choose attitudes and actions (behaviours and reactions) to improve your marriage - not to tear it down and dishonoring our covenant to our spouse and ultimately God.

The Spring season of a marriage is when everything looks new and optimistic, and we work on new projects together. It creates emotions of excitement, joy, happiness and hope and our attitudes towards each other is positive and trustworthy. We are busy and productive and so much is happening. We are hopeful that things are changing but be aware of the barrenness of a busy lives, as we can live past each other if we do not make time for ourselves and for each other. The lesson for spring is to be intentional and to balance work and recreation in your lives. This reminds me of the wife of noble character from Proverbs 31.

Pastor Rick and Kay Warren
(Christian couples' counsellors

and author of the book: The purpose driven life) recommends the following strategies that can be established during spring to be embedded for autumn and winter times:

- Birth daily: Take time each day to recharge mentally, physically and emotionally.
- Withdraw weekly to spend time together away from work and try and keep it pencilled in usually the same day of the week.
- Abandon annually – you have to make time and not just take time for a holiday, which could be a staycation and doesn't need to be expensive.

Summer season in a marriage is when things are going smoothly, no big crises arise and nothing too dramatic occurs. Happiness, satisfaction, accomplishment and connection are the emotions of summer and we experience attitudes of those like the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23).

Maximize the opportunity to invest in your relationship. This is the time to dig deep and deal with niggles and annoyances that can cripple you in time to come. Do not wait for autumn before you seek help or learn skills, like how to communicate effectively or to understand each other well

- it might be too late. This will keep the marriage in a state of fullness even in times of conflicts.

As the leaves fall during the autumn, this is also the time in marriage that we experience lots of changes - some positive and some negative. Spouses change as time goes on because of changes like buying your first home, starting a family and when children start school. Our responsibilities increase and so our time could also be divided between many things that need doing. It is easy to start losing sight of the “us” who entered the marriage.

Change is stressful and will affect your family for a long time. Some change is worthwhile and will benefit your family for a long time. It is important to also recognise that some characteristics in your spouse may never change because of the difference in how we were raised.

Some of us are extremely neat and tidy because you were brought up with no help in the house other than your family, whilst your spouse may have grown up with a cleaner and gardener

and never learned the importance of keeping a tidy environment.

So, this can bring tensions as you might expect your spouse to know what to do without you verbalising it because it's so

ingrained in you, but to them, they do not see it or expect someone else to do it for them. If it is that important to one spouse then they need to either verbalise their wishes or accept that it would not be done as well as they do it, because the other person will not change.

The emotions of autumn may include those of sadness, apprehension and emotional depletion. Couples may have attitudes of great concern and uncertainty of where and how their marriage will end up. Like summer marriages, the couple can dig deep and return to spring as they face the fact that we are together for better or for worse, in sickness and in health and in sense and nonsense. The alternative fork in the road leads to winter marriages.

During the winter marriage, we face our darkest hours, and everyone goes through it. Wintertime is characterised by events where the couple experiencing loss of a family member like a parent, sibling, friend or a child, serious illness or bankruptcy.

You need to learn how to get through this winter together and not be torn apart.

In winter months, difficulties could also occur not as a result of the difficulties itself but in the manner we respond to them. It is therefore important that you both continue to practice good communication.

Feelings or emotions experienced in winter is hurt, anger, disappointment, loneliness, feeling rejected etc.

These feelings are not specific to gender; however, these emotions are displayed differently by gender. Remember that these emotions are experienced as a person process the event.

Therefore, how you respond to your spouse is your choice – although your spouse might be the reason or cause of the event. And in all of these, God seeks that at least one of the couples will partner with Him.

Reactions of destructiveness in the way you speak, speaking harshly, blaming each other speaking at all-withdrawal where you live different lives under the same roof or even violent acts creates a climate of harshness, coldness, bitterness and detachment. In the winter season, couples are unwilling to negotiate differences. They argue because their point is not being heard or being accepted. Bitterness creeps in because of unforgiveness.

During wintertime, it can appear that there is no hope, but it can be the springboard for a husband and wife to seek help and at that moment be aware of the spirit of pride, as pride can cloud your perception due to uncertainty. This is not the time to jump ship but to anchor down. God uses winter to work on the individual to improve unity.

A christian wife in any season of marriage where conflicts arises must build up herself in Christ, and seek wisdom and grace as to how to live out the Gospel Truth in her relationship with her husband.

Remember that we are more than conquerors through Christ that loves us. (Romans 8:37)

Managing Season of financial difficulty.

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Maybe you have been crying, know that God sees and hears your cry, dear sister. There is no famine in heaven and our Lord's hand is mighty to save. He is our Provider if only we open our hearts and receive from Him.

Philippians 4:19 in K JV says

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ.

Therefore, in order to survive this season, hold on to the promises of God. Yes, your God will supply all your needs. Do not worry or panic?

Let us look at the things you can do while trusting God to meet your need.

i. Keep trusting the Lord. Go to the Lord in prayer as a family and ask what He will have you do.

ii. Look for what to offer to others in terms of service for friends, family or your neighbours. Do you have a hobby that can bless others with? Like baking and sewing? Then, serve others with it.

iii. Be resourceful, grow your own food, cook more often at home and eat out less. Share what you can as you put your trust in God.

iv. Budget your family money, and do not spend money unnecessarily. Be prudent!

v. Do not compare your finance with others, be content and grateful.

vi. Plan ahead in everything.

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I recently got admitted to the bar after a journey of about four years in a foreign land. I had hoped that once I was done with my requalification, I would enjoy a smooth ride in my career, little did I know that I was in for a surprise.

My life has always been what can be described as fairly smooth. I graduated from college, got a nice job in a nice firm, made applications to pursue my masters in Canada and got admitted in a stride; got married also within that period. So, you can largely say that life has been kind to me.

My move to Canada had its challenges but I was also largely helped by God as I really didn't have to look for a job, once I applied, I got the job.

Fast forward to year 2020 after my admission to the Alberta Bar, life became tough. I struggled to get a job. In fact, I still haven't secured a job and I recall in one of my sessions with God, I was praying and asking God what is going on with my life and how things were no longer as smooth as I expected them to be, I heard Him say – "my grace is available and has been released".

For a while, I couldn't understand the place of grace and its availability in my waiting game, but now I know that the Lord was teaching me patience and taking me through depths that I didn't realise was attainable.

I am still waiting for that dream

or perhaps explosion in my business, but here is what I did or still doing while waiting.

1. I chose to stop comparing myself with friends and professional colleagues who are "better placed" in their career path. There is a story to every glory and I have been deliberately reminding myself of this scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

2. I started a business. It is not enough to keep making applications without also thinking of something you can do in the interim. I actually decided to start up my firm and something I actually thought I couldn't do – a YouTube channel. It is important to put your energy somewhere so that you do not feel that your validation only comes from a job, i.e., paid employment.

3. Draw strength from God's Word and surround yourself with a network of believers. I can't emphasise this enough, the company you keep can either shape or break you. Surround yourself with people who do not see your inadequacies but are able to cheer you on and push you to break perceived limits. Also make sure that you are that kind of support to others as well.

4. Set targets or goals for yourself. Consider things you have been wanting to do for a long time and see this time of waiting as God's gift to you to complete or start working on those targets/goals. It doesn't come easy; you have to push yourself to get there. But one thing I know for a fact is that if you are willing and ready, God will work with you.

5. I also started deliberately spending time with my family and improving my culinary skills. You can do same or start that workout session, volunteer, help at Bible study, become resourceful, ideas will come once you are ready to give yourself to it.

Life is a journey, I am still going through it and working on all my plans and I sincerely hope that this write up will encourage someone and help you through your waiting time.

N.B

As at the time of publishing this edition, Francesca has found a job and working effectively for a couple of months now.

Managing season of financial difficulty. Contd. from page 5

Finally, Keep praying, and God will surely make a way out of this difficulty if you continue to trust Him.

THE EXEMPLARY WIFE TO A NOT YET SAVED HUSBAND OR NOT SO STRONG CHRISTIAN HUSBAND

Veronica Simbada

Most people like step-by-step instructions. And when you search there are a lot of steps out there such as steps on how to do things and steps on how to get somewhere. Steps on basically everything! So, I thought I would list some steps on how to be an exemplary wife to a not yet saved or strong Christian husband.

Here are your steps:

- i. Look at Jesus!
- ii. Keep looking at Jesus!
- iii. Keep on looking at Jesus!

This is too easy I hear you say. Well, it is. We complicate things for ourselves. All we have to do is look at Jesus then do what he did and manifest Jesus in your marriage.

- i. Look at Jesus!

1. Jesus loves us. We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19) God loved us first. He loved us before He created us. Jesus loved us and went to the cross to die for us before we were born. So, wife look at Jesus and love your husband unconditionally.

2. Jesus prayed for us. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent

Me.” (John 17:20-21) So wife, look at Jesus and know that the greatest good you can do for your husband is to pray for him.

3. Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 5:25-34 – Jesus always had time to minister. He stood still and made time. So, wife look at Jesus and stand still, make time to minister to your husband.

4. Philippians 2:6-9 – Jesus had a servant heart. So, wife, look at Jesus and love your spouse by putting his needs before your own. This is not ignoring your needs, but when he has a legitimate need (not anything that would violate you as a person or the Word of God), it is loving to do what you can to help him. Invite him to enjoy a deeper relationship with you and hopefully a future relationship with Jesus Christ.

5. Luke 4:18-22 - All the people marvelled at Jesus. So, wife look at Jesus and do what 1 Peter 3:1-7 says to win over their unbelieving husbands “without words” but by the “behaviour” of “purity

and reverence” and “the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit”. You be the Bible your husband reads.

- ii. Keep looking at Jesus!
 - iii. Keep on looking at Jesus!
- Never stop looking at Jesus!

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.”

Proverbs 31:10-12 NKJV

