

28 FLASHING LIGHTS BEFORE MARRIAGE

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Go down this list and consider your current relationship. If some of these areas are problems before marriage, the likelihood they'll become more significant problems is high. These issues often become more problematic after the commitment to a life-long relationship is made.

There are always some differences and even irritants in a relationship. Adjustments and some 'give and take' in relationships are perfectly normal. In fact, opposite personalities are often a perfect match. More often than not, they help round off our sharp edges, develop grace and patience and help to balance us. Not everything and not every day is perfect in a typical Christian marriage.

However, if some things are *increasingly* causing you concern, take heed. They are flashing lights – if not flashing yellow for 'proceed with caution', then perhaps it's 'red' – stop until the light turns green.

Marriage is a very serious matter, and it's for life. If any of these warning lights are '*increasingly*' flashing, disturbing or annoying you greatly, you should be having second thoughts about whether to proceed. As hurtful and embarrassing as it will be to back out of a commitment just a short time before the marriage is to take place – if you don't have peace about it before the Lord, do NOT proceed any further. With the passing of time, hurts will heal, and embarrassments will fade.

Remember, it's too late after the wedding to change your mind. Marriage is for life. Go over this list thoughtfully and prayerfully, and don't try to ignore any of the lights that flash for you. Don't sweep your worries under the carpet. Face them head-on.

1. Do you have a persistent uneasy feeling about the relationship? A lack of inner peace?
2. Do you have frequent arguments?
3. Are there little annoyances, traits, behaviours or habits that you noticed earlier but you tried to ignore them, hoping they would go away? Now you find you are growing less tolerant of those things and more frequently bugged.
4. Do you avoid discussing sensitive subjects because you fear hurting your partner's feelings or starting an argument? Is there something you would like to ask but you haven't yet asked?
5. Are you getting more involved physically, but you are still uncomfortable with 'who' the person is or 'how' they act or how they 'waste' their time or 'feed' their habit?
6. Do you find yourself constantly doing what your partner wants to do? Could this mean your partner is dominating the relationship and may be the controlling type?
7. Do you detect serious emotional disturbances such as extreme fears, extreme shyness, bizarre behaviour, irrational anger, etc.?
8. Do you worry about your partner's lack of interest in spiritual things or how seldom you see him/her reading the Bible or mentioning prayer?
9. Do you have a nagging fear that your partner may not even genuinely know Christ?

10. Are you the one who is always trying to bring up spiritual matters? Are you trying to prop up your partner spiritually - whose spiritual desires are lagging?
11. Has the thought entered your head, more than once, that you are taking on an 'improvement project' – hoping you will be able to change your partner once you are married?
12. Are you staying in the relationship through fear? Do you feel you are being rail-roaded or pushed?
13. Is your partner constantly complaining about apparently unreal aches and pains or going from doctor to doctor?
14. Does your partner continually make excuses for not finding a job or have reasons for quitting often?
15. Are you bothered by your partner's spending habits and inability to budget?
16. Does your partner seem overly jealous and suspicious - questioning your word constantly and feeling that everyone is against her/him?
17. Is the one you date a perfectionist and constantly critical and picky about things – even about you?
18. Are your parents or the significant people in your life firmly against your marriage? Do you sense they are worried for you?
19. Do you have very few areas of common interest?
20. Do you get upset with the amount of time your partner spends on a hobby or with friends – almost sensing that you come second or third?
21. Does your partner find it difficult to accept constructive criticism? Do they apologize for wrongs?
22. Does your partner have career or business aspirations that bother or disturb you because of your sense of priorities?
23. Does the gap between your education or income level and your partner's make you feel inferior? Does the gap or disparity lie 'beneath the surface' of too many conversations?
24. Do you have major disagreements over having children and family values?
25. Does your partner make sarcastic comments that are supposed to be funny, but they are constantly hurting you?
26. Do you find there's a constant hassle about 'how' to spend your free time or an ongoing conflict about time spent with family or friends – especially during vacations and holidays?
27. Do you have a growing intolerance for your future in-laws and their 'control and interference' in your relationship?
28. Does your partner try to change when you bring up any of the above worries or concerns you have or do you just see defensiveness, self-justification and no-change? If they won't change before marriage, what makes you think they'll change afterwards?