

BEFORE THE BIG DAY



BY DONITA HOWELL

FOREWORD

Have you ever received a special gift from a special friend? My dear friend Donita shared the manuscript of this book with me many years ago, and I've held on to it as a special treasure. After all these years, it brings me great pleasure to share this e-book with you so you can experience a part of the rich legacy Donita left behind.

Donita was in her late 20's when we met at a church-sponsored singles' retreat. She was wise beyond her years. Donita played an instrumental role in my growth as a Christian and offered tremendous support when I started FIGHTing for my marriage. She not only persuaded me to spend more time praying and studying my Bible, but she also encouraged me to dig deeper and learn more about important topics like the plan of salvation, victory over sin, Bible prophecy, natural health principles, modest dress, and country living.

I believe the enemy was angry at what was taking place between the two of us. He attacked Donita's health and her heart. Not only was she diagnosed with lupus, but she also discovered that the young minister who was winning her affections was also winning the affections of a young lady who would eventually become his wife. The news about the young man's unfaithfulness devastated Donita, and her already fragile health began to steadily decline.

Despite these challenges, Donita chose to trust God and walk by faith instead of by sight. In a December 2004 letter, she wrote the following words of faith to me: *"God is going to help us and use us to help others, Anika."* God helped both of us endure our hardships like good soldiers, and then He saw fit to lay Donita to rest January 26, 2007, at the age of 33-years-old.

Before her untimely death, God used Donita to help countless individuals turn their eyes upon Jesus and grow in their Christian experience. He used Donita's



wise counsel to help and encourage me when my marriage was falling apart. I hope her wise counsel will help you to build your life on a firm foundation, Jesus Christ – the Rock. And may her counsel help you to avoid the snares of Satan as you make decisions about life, your future spouse, and marriage – BEFORE THE BIG DAY.

BEFORE THE BIG DAY

It is both natural and ordained by God for a young woman to desire to be united in marriage to a man. This gift from God is a part of His divine plan. It is one of the creative, caring, and unique ways He desires to show us how He wants to be intimately connected to us. However, this design is often intercepted by the enemy because of his insane jealousy of God's love for us. He is also aware that human beings have an opportunity to go to a place for eternity that he can never return to. Additionally, Satan knows that he is going to be destroyed. In other words, misery loves company. Therefore, as a result, Satan seeks in several ways to so pervert the pathways to man and woman becoming one, that the wrong choice can affect one's eternal destiny. It would be prudent for young women to listen to the personal testimonies of other women and to carefully seek the Lord **BEFORE** they pledge to honor, cherish, and obey a man who should look, act, and speak just like her maker Jesus Christ.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So, ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (Ephesians 5:25-28)



LIVING SINGLE

1. Do I accept Jesus as my Lord and personal savior?

Many young women mistakenly believe that generational membership in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is an automatic pass into the kingdom of heaven. However, it is vitally important to remember, God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. Only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, *Here am I; send me*" (Isaiah 6:8), *to open blind eyes, to turn men "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified"* (Acts 26:18) — *they alone pray in sincerity, "Thy kingdom come. (MB 108.3)*

If Jesus is not elevated in our lives and a husband to us, we will easily make a man our god and hang on his every word even if it is not according to scripture.

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood anymore. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called.' (Isaiah 54:4,5)

Unfortunately, some young men have confused the wounds inflicted upon them by Satan through families, e.g., abandonment issues from a mother or father, abuse of any kind etc., as punishment by God. This leads to a perverse view of who God is. Thus, some young men who profess to represent God, actually misrepresent Him because they have unresolved issues of anger. They ultimately enter into relationships with females displaying controlling, manipulative, abusive behaviors that drown the unsanctified woman.

Stern Coldness in Marriage a Cause of Depression – *When you married your wife, she loved you. She was extremely sensitive, yet with painstaking on your part, and fortitude on hers, her health need not have been what it is. But your stern coldness made you like an iceberg, freezing up the channel of love and affection. Your censure and faultfinding have been like desolating hail to a sensitive plant. It has chilled and nearly destroyed the life of the plant. Your love of the world is eating out the good traits of your character. (2MCP 485.2)*



2. Do I study to show myself approved?

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)



Do you really know and understand why you are a Seventh-day Adventist? Can you explain the role of the 2300-day prophecy in the formation of this church in a way that a child can understand? Is it just another denomination to you? Do you think you are saved by "keeping the law" or by how you eat, drink, and dress?

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation. (FW 94.1)

3. Inherited and Cultivated Tendencies

Every young woman should prayerfully ask herself the following questions:

- Have I examined my family to know the characteristics I have inherited (those that are known) from both parents and how this will affect my selection of a mate?
- Am I aware of my own behaviors, fears, attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of relationships?
- Do I need to forgive one or both of my parents for any abuse of any kind?
- Do I have unresolved anger?
- Have I experienced abuse of any kind from a non-family member? Do I lack confidence and put myself down?





After carefully and prayerfully considering the answers to these questions, a young woman needs to address these issues LONG before she even thinks of becoming a man's wife. Denial of, or refusal to address these issues will lead to intimate involvement with unconsecrated men who seek out females with little to no confidence to abuse, mistreat, and destroy physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Families Will Pass in Review Before God - When parents and children meet at the final reckoning, what a scene will be presented! Thousands of children who have been slaves to appetite and debasing vice, whose lives are moral wrecks, will stand face to face with the parents who made them what they are. Who but the parents must bear this fearful responsibility? Did the Lord make these youth corrupt? Oh, no! He made them in His image, a little lower than the angels. who, then, has done the fearful work of forming the life character? Who changed their characters so that they do not bear the impress of God and must be forever separated from His presence as too impure to have any place with the pure angels in a holy heaven? Were the sins of the parents transmitted to the children in perverted appetites and passions? And was the work completed by the pleasure-loving mother in neglecting to properly train them according to the pattern given her? All these mothers will pass in review before God just as surely as they exist. (CG 561.4)



4. Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Young women should be aware of the condition of their physical, emotional, and spiritual health. They should ask themselves, "Am I healthy?"

Consider the following: When was the last time you had a head-to-toe physical examination? Do you have a disease? Do you cleanse your body from toxins that can affect your ability to think clearly and discern God's word on a regular basis? Do you know and follow the 8 laws of health?



Are you aware that the benefits of following the 8 laws of health will prepare your body for the duties of marriage as well as prepare your body to withstand the taxation it receives during pregnancy? Are you aware of uncontrolled appetite and passions that affect both men and women?

Intemperance is on the Rampage - Intemperance still continues its ravages. Iniquity in every form stands like a mighty barrier to prevent the progress of truth and righteousness. Social wrongs, born of ignorance and vice, are still causing untold misery, and casting their baleful shadow upon both the church and the world. Depravity among the youth is increasing instead of decreasing. Nothing but earnest, continual effort will avail to remove this desolating curse. The conflict with interest and appetite, with evil habits and unholy passions, will be fierce and deadly; only those who shall move from principle can gain the victory in this warfare. (CG 401.1)

5. True Education

Young women should not only pursue academic studies but also learn basic life skills that will help them to not only care for themselves but for their future spouse, children, and home.



They should consider the following:



- Aside from striving for a college degree, do you keep your dorm room or apartment clean?
- Can you cook good, appealing, healthy food?
- Do you have domestic qualities and abilities that enable you to multitask in an efficient manner?
- Are you given to hospitality and care for the poor?
- Do you study children to learn about the proper way to care for them in eating, drinking, and dressing to form their characters for eternity?
- Are you a shopaholic (vain) or do you go to the opposite extreme and neglect your hygiene and personal appearance to give an "air" of godliness and holiness?
- Do you have a genuinely friendly personality, demeanor, and countenance?
- Do you consecrate all your hopes, dreams, and ambitions to God and patiently allow Him to direct your paths?
- Consider your career choice. Will your chosen occupation help you to be a representative for God to win souls to Him?

It is the right of every daughter of Eve to have a thorough knowledge of household duties, to receive training in every department of domestic labor. Every young lady should be so educated that if called to fill the position of wife and mother, she may preside as a queen in her own domain. She should be fully competent to guide and instruct her children and to direct her servants, or, if need be, to minister with her own hands to the wants of her household. It is her right to understand the mechanism of the human body and the principles of hygiene, the matters of diet and dress, labor and recreation, and countless others that intimately concern the well-being of her household. It is her right to obtain such a knowledge of the best methods of treating disease that she can care for her children in sickness, instead of leaving her precious treasures in the hands of stranger nurses and physicians. (AH 87.3)



WHO CAN FIND A FAITHFUL MAN?

1. Friendship

It is very important to establish a friendship with a man first. However, you should thoughtfully ask yourself, "Is he really my friend?" And is there an additional connection between us that could develop into a lasting relationship?



Other questions to consider include:

- What is my testimony regarding how we met? Will my testimony walk me through steps that reveal God directed this person to come into my life and me in his?
- Does he respect me in front of his friends, peers, and colleagues?
- What are his past relationships like?
- Is he open or secretive?
- Does he have a significant number of female friends? Do I know all his female friends?



- Does he have appropriate boundaries with females including me?
 - Does he have a healthy, loving, affectionate, respectful relationship with his mother? What is she like in demeanor, countenance, and character?
 - Does he have the same type of relationship with his father? If his biological father is absent, does he have strong godly men who are positive role models? (*Jesus should be his first role model even if he has a good relationship with his biological father*).
- Do I have trustworthy, godly friends who are praying with and for me about this relationship?
 - Does he have control over his appetite and passions?
 - Does he have a problem with his temper?
 - How does he respond to pressure?
 - Does he live what he professes?



- What are his friends like?
- Does he have a mind of his own?
- ***For Students:** Am I aware that students should not become involved in a courtship?

While at school, students should not allow their minds to become confused by thoughts of courtship. They are there to gain a fitness to work for God, and this thought is ever to be uppermost. Let all students take as broad a view as possible of their obligations to God. Let them study earnestly how they can do practical work for the Master during their student life. Let them refuse to burden the souls of their teachers by showing a spirit of levity and a careless disregard of rules. (CT 100.2)

- It is **EXTREMELY** important that the relationship between you and a young man is clearly defined to you, him, and everyone around you. What is the definition of courtship to you and to him?
- Have you been introduced to his parents and he to yours? Is there any controversy between yourselves and your families either justified or unjustified?
- What are his plans for his future regarding supporting himself and/or a family? Are they realistic?
- Are you able and willing to maintain a high standard of virtue in your relationship?
- Are we aware of any hidden or obvious jealousies from those who profess to be friends to both of us?
- Do we handle any controversy together showing a united front?

2. Engagement

When a young woman is considering becoming engaged, she should consider the answers to the following questions:

- Did he propose in a manner that reflects fasting, praying, and seeking the approval of your father and his family?



- Does he have steady, full-time employment?
- How does he handle money?
- How do I handle money?



- If there is any controversy among the families has it been addressed in a Christ-like manner?

- Have we discussed family planning and how soon to have children?
- Have we discussed relocating, weighing the pros and cons of being too close or too far away from family?
- Do we make decisions together?



- Does he display the ability to take charge as the head of the home while giving consideration to, and respecting your input, yet ultimately following through with the decision?



HAPPILY EVER AFTER . . .

In summary, this counsel is by no means exhaustive, and each reader is strongly encouraged to prayerfully read this material and consider other areas of importance as the Lord reveals them to you. When we seek to have a closer walk with Christ and ask for wisdom, He will give it to us. Of course, God has supplied the best principles to follow in the *Holy Bible*, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, and more specifically, *The Adventist Home*, *Child Guidance*, and many other manuscripts.

Singleness is a blessing because God truly is loving, kind, and merciful. He gives us time to allow Him to shape and fashion our lives, through healing and growth. But this is dependent on IF we would take advantage of the resources available. He will map out our lives in a way that will shield us from the bitter results of hastiness, hardheadedness, and argumentativeness. Our marriages would be built on a foundation that is ready to weather the storms that WILL come! Every female who desires to, can find her "second self" and be the rib of her mate. (*Genesis 2:21*)

And last but certainly not least, be prepared to possibly have to accept that God might



say "not right now" to marriage when you think you have met your mate. He may want the both of you to have more time for Him to prepare you. Remember, love is not a "feeling". We cannot, and should not, try to "fix" anyone. Circumstances should not control our lives. We must humble ourselves. Love is not

impulsive. (*1 Corinthians 13*) In all things, make God first, best, and last. Do all things to the glory of God!

Many blessings to you as you prayerfully obey your Lord to reap the benefits He has for all His daughters!

Signed,

A daughter of God who's been there but not giving up hope!

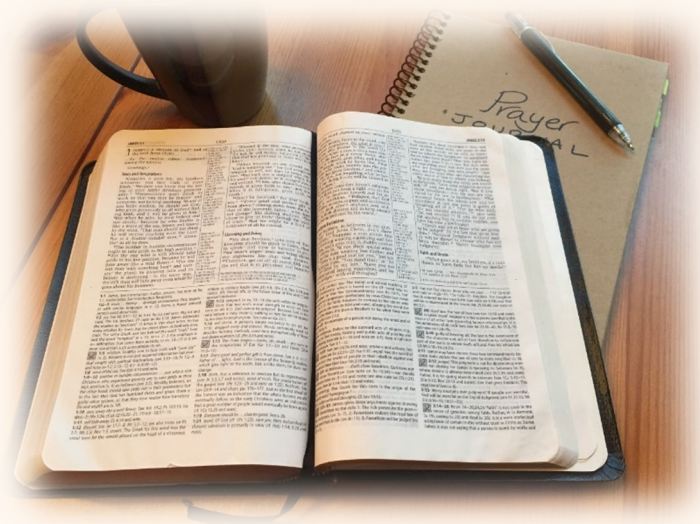


SOURCES:

- *The Holy Bible* (KJV)
- Wisdom from the Holy Spirit (and experience)

The following books are by Christian, inspired author Ellen White:

- *Mind, Character, and Personality* (MCP)
- *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (MB)
- *Faith and Works* (FW)
- *Child Guidance* (CG)
- *The Adventist Home* (AH)
- *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (CT)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donita Lynn Howell was born March 1, 1973, in Chicago, Illinois. She was affectionately called “Nita” by her siblings, and was known for her cheerful, loving spirit and her willingness to help others.

Donita gave her heart to Christ and became a Seventh-day Adventist in her mid-twenties. She served as a Sabbath school teacher and found great pleasure in studying the Bible and sharing Jesus with others. This book is part of Donita’s effort to encourage young ladies to seek Jesus and His counsel BEFORE THE BIG DAY.

After receiving a bachelor’s degree from Oakwood University in 1999, Donita went on to obtain a master’s degree. She worked as a social worker until her health began to steadily decline due to complications associated with lupus. On January 26, 2007, Donita fell asleep in Jesus.



MORE FROM FIGHT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE WITH ANIKA . . .



Is there any hope for a broken marriage?

Every year millions of couples face challenges and struggle in their marriages. The cause of, and severity of these marital challenges vary, but for 50% of Americans, the end result is divorce!

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Join Anika as she discloses the five weapons of faith, shares countless examples of God's continued goodness in the midst of trials and triumphs. This inspirational book offers encouragement and hope to wives who have ever felt discouraged or hopeless in their marriage.

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No matter how hopeless your marriage seems, Anika's transparent testimony will inspire you with hope and give you the tools and motivation to help you gain victories as you FIGHT for your marriage today!

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Would you like additional assistance as you FIGHT for your marriage? Anika offers group and private marriage support for brave wives who desire to gain victories in spiritual warfare and marriage.

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Anika is available to speak on the topic of Christian marriage during the following live and virtual events:

- Church programs
- Conferences
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Retreats
- Interviews
- Panel discussions

Contact her at anika@fightforyourmarriagetoday.com for additional details.

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