



Issacharian Daughters

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Dear Girls,

BEAUTIFUL WORDS—MY ENGAGEMENT STORY, PART 2

I always believed that if I was to be married, the Lord was preparing me for a man and preparing that man for me. I knew that He would bring us together in His good timing, and I didn't need to worry about it. So I didn't worry about it. And the Lord has proven to be so faithful!

I'm very thankful for wise parents like mine and a father like mine who would take the time to get to know Pete to protect me from becoming emotionally attached pre-maturely or unnecessarily if Pete and I proved not to have similar convictions. And I'm thankful for the wisdom and understanding of Pete and his submission to authority, that he would be willing to work with Dad in the beginning.

I want to point out some things in my story (from ID058—Beautiful Words—My Engagement Story, Part 1), if I may:

Pete and I didn't know one another until Jonathan recommended us to one another. Neither of us could have organised this ourselves. God sovereignly organised it and used people like Jonathan to bring us together. I think it is interesting that Jonathan showed Pete my *Wanted* poster back in 2004, but it wasn't God's timing for Pete to contact my dad until 2006 when Jonathan, upon spending more time with me, recommended me again to his friend.

I also think it is quite significant that it was through showing hospitality to Jonathan, through trying to make Dad successful in showing hospitality to Jonathan, that helped Jonathan get to know me a bit and recommend me to his friend, Pete.

As Pete's parents and my parents got to know one another, I think everyone was in awe of God's sovereignty in our lives and how He had brought our two families together. As Pete and I get to know one another, it is fascinating to see how God has prepared us for this courtship.

For example, God has prepared me for this courtship with Pete and a potential marriage with him in so many ways, but I'll just mention a few:

1. Several years ago my mum asked me to read a book on the dominion mandate. The title didn't grab me. It was called, *Bound for Glory*. It sounded to me like it was about dying and going to heaven, so I wasn't very interested. But Mum had asked me, so I thought I should. Well, the book was amazing. It molded my thinking in so many ways and helped me to understand something I had never even thought about before: the dominion mandate. Reading that book and understanding the dominion mandate is one of the key things God sovereignly ordained to prepare me to be a suitable wife for Pete. Pete understands the dominion mandate and lives his life trying to fulfil it. Isn't it great how God sovereignly moved through my mum to prepare me in that way? Just

think if I had not been obedient — I would have lost out on so much. Pete has really desired to marry someone who would understand his need to fulfil the dominion mandate, so God was fulfilling Pete's desire by preparing me in this way.

2. Dad heard about a history conference in the USA and really wanted someone to attend. He couldn't go, so he sent me. While I was over there, he extended my tickets so that I could also attend an Entrepreneurial Bootcamp. Now Pete is an entrepreneur, and attending this conference has helped me to understand him and his business and understand the need to be willing to face risk. This has prepared me a great deal for this courtship and prepared me to be a better wife to Pete. Isn't this interesting that God sovereignly ordained that in doing something for Dad, I would be prepared to meet a man like Pete, and in fact that I would begin to desire to marry a man like Pete who had his own business that a wife and family could help him with? In this way, God was conforming my desires to His and preparing Pete as a fulfilment of those desires.
3. I have always tried to obey God and honour my parents in the area of modesty, but at one stage in seeking to be modest and to be covered up, I fell into looking very masculine. One day it really struck me that while I was probably pleasing God with my modesty, I probably wasn't pleasing Him by looking masculine. I realised that I needed to dress femininely to please Him. So I set out to build a feminine and beautiful wardrobe that was also modest. Pete has commented so often on the way I dress. He calls it elegant. God teaching me this was again preparing me for this courtship with Pete and preparing me to be a fulfilment of a desire in Pete's life of a wife who was modest and feminine and elegant.
4. One of the best ways God has prepared me is in the area of communication. Dad has taught me to say or ask what I mean and not use manipulative tactics. For example, instead of saying, "What are you doing on Friday?" one should be direct by asking, "Would you like to come around for dinner on Friday?" He has taught me not to hint at things, but to talk to the point. I could have laughed off Dad's lessons or not listened, but I didn't. I tried to please Dad by communicating in the way he wanted. And now I've found that communicating like this is a real blessing to Pete. So again, God was working through my parents to prepare me for marriage. I didn't need to know that that was what God was doing, I just needed to obey my parents like God required of me.
5. Back in 2001 I heard a girl say that when she is struggling with feelings towards a young man, she would tell her dad about it and ask for his help in guarding her heart. As soon as I heard her say that, I thought, "That is the type of relationship I want with my dad." Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." So when a time came when I was struggling with feelings towards a man, I thought to myself, "Well, here is my opportunity!" So I talked to Dad. I tried to concentrate on what to say rather than thinking about actually doing it because I didn't want to chicken out! But it was great! Dad was great. "Well, Genevieve," he said, "This shows that you're wired up normally and everything's working just fine." I grinned. "But you know you should probably avoid ever seeing this man again." "I know." There was a whoosh of something straight into my heart at that point. It was love and gratitude towards Dad and the Lord. It was peace and joy and contentment. And I found my sense and reason returning and a freedom from the feelings I had been experiencing. When God created the world, He created it to operate in a certain way. Resting and trusting in the authority and protection of parents is His idea. It is the proper order of things, and if we operate within this order, we are blessed as a result. Anyway, that opened the door to being able to speak to Dad about things on my heart. And I built up this sort of relationship with him. This was such a blessing when Pete came on the scene because when I was confused or uncertain or had questions, I could go so easily and talk to Dad about these things. We had learned to talk on this level. And it

meant that Dad could ask me how I was going emotionally and monitor where Pete's and my hearts were and how we were emotionally by simply asking. Because he could monitor this, it meant he felt free to let Pete and I spend a lot of time together asking one another questions and getting to know one another to establish to our satisfaction that, if we were to marry, it would be an equal yoking. For me, being able to talk to Dad was a huge blessing at such a crucial time of deciding whether to enter into a courtship. And another huge blessing which has come out of learning to open my heart to Dad is that it now comes naturally to be open with Pete. Within marriage I trust that will lead to wonderful intimacy with one another.

So God sovereignly organised this courtship. And it has been through seeking to live in obedience to Him and to my parents and doing my job as a daughter — helping my parents with their hospitality which is a family ministry — that the connection was first made with Pete through his friend Jonathan and that I have been prepared for this engagement. Living in obedience to God and my parents is not always easy. Doing my duty as a daughter is not always a bed of roses. Sometimes there are thorns! There is a constant struggle against the flesh and my own sinful will. But with the help of the Holy Spirit and because of the Lord's grace and mercy, victories have been won and progress has been made. And now on the brink of marriage I am excited to say that the struggle, the difficulties are so worth it! (See ID049 — It Is So Worth It at <http://www.hef.org.nz/page/890437>)

Marriage in one sense is a starting point and in another sense a finish line. I'm now catching a glimpse of the finish line of maidenhood and seeing in a new way, with a sharper focus, the true abiding *value* of these years of preparation for marriage — learning home-making skills, working on family relationships and helping my father. The closer I get to marriage the more humbled and blessed I feel that the Lord brought me onto this track of preparing for marriage in these years of maidenhood. As you too prepare for marriage, do not grow weary in doing good. Persevere!

One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3v13-14.



On the bridge where we became engaged.

Pete and I are now making preparations towards a wedding and working towards setting a date. We would value your prayers for our engagement, that God will bring all things about in His perfect timing; and for our marriage, that through it we might glorify Him.

For the Greater Glory of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

Genevieve Smith
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