

# Is It Just Cold Feet – Or Are You Afraid to Marry?

**How to tell the difference between normal pre-marital jitters versus a genuine “red flag” that warns you’re on the wrong track.**

By Byron and Carla Weathersbee

We’ve all heard the stories about either the bride or groom getting a good case of “cold feet” prior to the actual wedding day. Generally these incidences are disregarded as some form of normal pre-marital anxiety that will soon pass. But how do you know for certain whether you should pay attention to such attacks of concern or whether you should just shrug your shoulders and ignore these potential “red flags”?

First, it is not unusual when someone is contemplating a huge step like marriage for numerous thoughts to potentially enter their mind. Thoughts like:

- *Am I merely infatuated and therefore choosing the wrong person for a lifetime commitment?*
- *Could I lose my independence to such a degree that I lose my identity?*
- *Will we have enough money as a couple to make it on our own?*
- *Are we really compatible? Are our families compatible?*

Whenever we are on the verge of entering any unfamiliar stage of life, it’s normal for questions to arise along with a certain degree of fear. In fact, some forms of fear are healthy and provide us with a warning system that we are about to enter into an experience that is unsafe or possibly harmful.

Fear can slow us down and prevent us from making a bad decision, alerting us to what we really need to do and why. But fear can also hold us back from making good choices, like when we’ve found exactly the right person to spend our lives with, but our mind remains full of those negative “what-if” scenarios.

## The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge

Proverbs 1:7 tells us, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” So if you are trying to determine whether your concerns about your marriage plans warrant further scrutiny, fearing the Lord is the beginning of that knowing. Seeking His leading in prayer and through the counsel of other Godly people that have your best interest in mind is central to making the right decision.

While marrying someone who shares similar values, direction, and interests is important, all those considerations assume *you are ready for marriage*, that you understand the nature and demands of what marriage entails. Consequently, rather than asking, “Is this person or that person the one I am to

marry?” you might start first by asking, “Do I know who I am as a person? Am I ready for marriage?”

Many people search for another person to “complete them” rather than doing the hard work of addressing their own wounds and needs for healing. No other human being can complete or heal us. Only by allowing a Holy God to do a deep work in our individual lives are we prepared to commit ourselves to another person with fidelity and intimacy.

## Perfect Love Casts Out Fear

Each of us has our own “secret self,” the part of us where we hide such things as our jealousies, our addictions, and our hatred toward those who have wounded us. The act of marriage places us in the position where that curtain is pulled back exposing the good, the bad and the ugly parts of us. When someone sees into who we really are, that is called intimacy. And that can be very intimidating and scary!

The good news is when we love our partner with a Godly love, that act brings God’s Spirit into the equation. When we love our partner with the same love that God loves us, we are moved away from fear. In fact, “*perfect love casts out fear.*”

Of course by “perfect” we do not mean that we have the ability to love perfectly as God is capable of doing, but when we allow God to express His love *through* us, He is able to “get the job done” despite our shortcomings. Each time we allow God’s love to work in us and through us, we no longer have to hide ourselves; we can experience the love that casts out all fear.

Despite the “formulas,” pre-marital assessments, and Godly counsel that might be of great assistance and value in making a wise choice, there is something far beyond your natural human ability that has to ultimately guide your process - something supernatural. At some point you have to trust that God is leading you, that you have made the right choice. As *The Message* so wisely admonishes in Proverbs 3:5-7:

*Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for GOD'S voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil!*

Byron and Carla Weathersbee co-founded Legacy Family Ministries ([www.legacyfamily.org](http://www.legacyfamily.org)) in 1995 to prepare pre-engaged and engaged couples for marriage. In their new book *Before Forever*, available at [www.theleadingedgepublishing.com](http://www.theleadingedgepublishing.com), the authors offer inspirational and practical advice for making perhaps the most important decision of your life. The Weathersbees have counseled hundreds of couples over the years with incredible results!

