

What I wish I would have known about planning a Honeymoon.

By Jack and Jill married 15 years.

I have been married for over 15 years. Every day our love grows stronger, and we have based it on a solid foundation. We have been in church since way before we were married, have raised our children in church and with the Bible, but there are some things I wish I knew before I was married to my beloved wife and some advice, I wish I had been given on doing a honeymoon or taking anniversary vacations away from our kids.

My parents never really talked about marriage, the gift of intimacy, or what followed in husband/wife relationships. When I married my sweet wife, I saw her love for the church and the Lord and, after several months of seeing each other, we decided to get married, with her parents' permission of course.

I had little to do with planning the wedding but everything to do with planning the honeymoon. I rented a cabin for our first night and then another cabin for the last four nights. I had really wanted it to where we would have one cabin the entire time, but we had to split it because of availability purposes. If I had planned earlier than waiting 2 months before the honeymoon, we probably could have enjoyed one place the entire time. I learned that procrastination does not work well even though I thought it was enough time. We had travelled several hours that afternoon/evening, and arrived at our destination about 10:30 that night, got ready for bed, then gave ourselves to each other. That took a long time as we were so inexperienced (which we are glad of), and then went to sleep. Then we had to set the alarm to wake up about 5 hours later to be out of there before the cutoff time and spent a few hours "homeless" before our next cabin opened at 3 that pm. A little preplanning would have spared us some unneeded stress and waiting.

The next thing I realized is that I did not do a lot about planning. Thankfully we got to know each other more intimately but I didn't know what to do about meals. We didn't bring much food along and the place we stayed at was in a crowded area so driving anywhere could take 3 times longer than normal whether it was out to eat or the grocery store. We could have done other fun activities outside our cabin, but I had never really looked into it in advance. We did play one round of putt-putt golf, but we didn't like getting out in the traffic, aimlessly trying to find something to do. After 5 nights we were ready to come home. We didn't even use the hot tub on the back porch because neither of us knew how to use it and there were no directions for its operation. It was not filled up and completely ready. it also was not private enough for us.

Back to the intimate side of things. Even though we were inexperienced I realized that I could have read up on more of what to expect. I remember reading about a woman bleeding during first time sex, but I never knew it would be that much blood and my wife was never told bleeding can be expected. Not every couple does have bleeding. I never told her, assuming she knew and never really thought about it further, and no one else had either. In fact, she didn't even know what the act of marriage was all about or how children were formed, although in her twenties. She had gone to public school but, when they showed in a sex-ed class what was involved, she turned her eyes and ears away. Her parents never told her what to expect either. We had never talked about having marital intimacy. We had talked about having children and we wanted several but had said nothing further. She knew in some way I was going to guide her in what married couples do to have children. She was amazed at how it all worked but not to the extent of turning me away. She welcomed me, even though it was painful to begin with, and took nearly 2 hours, but she knew almost nothing and me just a little more.

So what do I recommend for couples just starting out for their honeymoon? My advice is for more planning to be done all the way around:

1. Plan your honeymoon way early. I had thought I did but 2 months was not enough. The husband can plan the entire thing, or you can plan it together.
2. Look at places near your destination where you can have fun, such as hiking, playing putt-putt, shopping, themed attractions, etc. You don't have to do everything but do try to have fun together outside of the bedroom. On an anniversary trip later we went shoe shopping, did several rounds of putt-putt, knew where to go out to eat, and visited a couple attractions, and even stayed at one place the entire time.
3. Talk to your engaged-to-be spouse about what to expect on the wedding night and the honeymoon. Neither may know everything of what to expect but some plans can be helpful.
4. Sometimes you both may be tired from the wedding day's festivities and arrive late. It's perfectly fine to get some sleep and consummate the marriage the next day. Better still plan the wedding earlier in the day.
5. If being romantic does not come naturally for you (it does not for most men) study how to be romantic. I didn't know about candles (scented or unscented) or candlelit dinners or even playing romantic music. I could have taken the initiative and did more. We had a good time, but it could have been much better, even to the extent of being great. We were bored and came home early instead.
6. Have a private area. Sometimes when you are told it's a cozy, private cabin, or cottage, it's not really THAT private. If that's what you want, make sure it is that way.
7. Stay pure before marriage. Saving the kisses and touches will make the first kiss much better and increases the expectation/excitement of the wedding night. Couples that cohabit before marriage do not have much to look forward to. They have already opened their gifts.
8. Don't expect your first intimate time to be spectacular. The first few times can be awkward as you are on a new learning curve. It takes days, weeks, months, and years to learn various ways of technique and how to please your spouse. I didn't discover the power of clitoral/vaginal stimulation until many years after we were married. Movies (though my wife and I have never seen them,) often portray the wild enjoyment of brand-new couples. That's all fake. Don't try to live up to fake expectations. Be yourself and learn together.
9. Don't worry about your physical appearance. Again, movies portray glamorous sex scenes with the chiseled bodies of men and the slender, seductive bodies of women. Be who you are. Your spouse married you and not a TV/movie star.
10. Though you may have done the following activities together already, the best place to seal it in stone for perpetual observance is on your honeymoon: start to pray together, read the Bible together, and attend church together. You have promised with a sacred, solemn vow to God that you will be together forever. Make Him the center focus of your marriage and you will be greatly blessed for it.

After the honeymoon, though, things get "back to normal" but that doesn't mean things can't be romantic and love can't grow sweeter. I remember our first year together before the birth of our first child. We went on dates whenever we wanted to. Then when our child came along, we could take him

in a carrier or have him watched for a few hours while we went on a shopping/dinner date. Our next few anniversaries, though, were rather quick, only lasting a night or two away from home but we didn't go very far. About 6 of those years we never got away at all. On our 5-year anniversary we decided to go to another cabin in the same vicinity where we spent our honeymoon. It was a more private area but not totally private. A cabin was right near us and they could look up at us anytime. There was also a fear that a bear could come around the cabin sides while we were in the hot tub and there was no way for us to get back in the cabin! One night we were inside and heard one at our window. We were very careful before we went to our car the next several mornings. We felt robbed of privacy again, but we did make a week of it, the longest trip we have ever taken together. A whole week away from home, just me and her. We went horseback riding, saw various attractions, went shopping at different stores, walked part of the town until we were wearing out, played putt-putt, walked along a creek, and enjoyed our romantic time in the cabin.

After we came home, things went back to normal. We still enjoyed our love life and passion, and more children came along and anniversaries. But some of those trips only lasted a day or two. Sadly, the people keeping our kids wanted us to hurry back. The primary reason they wanted us back was because our kids "got on their nerves" sometimes. Yes, we had a great time inside and outside wherever we were staying but it was so hurried. We would come back tired, not really having enjoyed it as much as we had hoped. Sometimes we stayed at crowded areas. One time we stayed at a "private" area but, when you walked outside, people could be standing around and you could also hear the conversations of people in the next room. How romantic! We had to be so quiet the entire time. Forget giving yourselves to each other in total abandon; we couldn't even ask in what suitcase a certain item was without the neighbors knowing I was looking for a toothbrush. A couple times we went on an anniversary where we had to endure a timeshare presentation. It was a free couple nights, but you felt pressured and had to submit to their time schedule.

What have I learned about anniversary trips after a decade and a half?

1. Make sure you spend TIME together. The longer the trip the better. We spent several of our anniversaries only a night or two away from home and hurried back. That wasn't the best thing for us to do. The last anniversary trip we took we said we were leaving for 5 nights. The child-sitters wanted us back earlier, but we had to get away and we persuaded them to do it for us. It was the greatest time ever. We spent lots of quality time together walking, playing fun marriage games, reading marriage literature on how to improve our marriage, and using a massage table which we had never done before. A romantic fireplace is also wonderful and we heard they had one before we went. We didn't want to come home after that. We had always wanted to come home, even after our honeymoon, but this was different. We felt like we were just beginning to know each other and wanted to stay a few more days. If you can't get away for a whole week, get away enough for what you think is great quality time. Each couple is different and what you can pull off varies from time to time.
2. You will always learn about each other. Keep learning. Go to new places. Have fun. You will discover things about your spouse that you never knew that they liked. Do as much dating as possible. Take walks together. Go in a hot air balloon ride for two. Go shopping together alone. Take a river boat. Go to a museum. Go camping. It will open new avenues of conversation concerning things you may have done years ago but you had totally forgotten that you loved that particular thing. That idea may lead to your next anniversary get-away.
3. Never get caught up in a rigid schedule. Look and plan, yes, but relax space things out, and enjoy. Sleep in often and wake up in your spouse's arms without the alarming clock going off.

You may not want to do that on the last night, though, particularly if you both are heavy sleepers, or at least go to sleep earlier that night.

4. Keep it very private and you can really enjoy yourself. Now that the kids are not around, you can do anything in the bedroom. You can pleasure each other to the fullest over and over again. You can relax and be noisy if that feels good to you. Take showers together like you never could before. You can dress or undress any way you please as well, all over your rental
5. Try and find a spacious area like the Little Stone Cottage to get those love embers glowing. The more space, the more fun to run and frolic and laugh. In short rejoice with the wife of your youth.
6. Remember to bring candles and other romantic paraphernalia. There are fake candles on various websites that flicker in the dark. You don't have to worry about catching anything on fire. For husbands, don't let only her wear the lingerie. Dress or undress to please her as well. Put on some cologne if that works and excites her. If you can do these things often at home, great, but it does become more difficult the more children you have, in our experience. Make your anniversaries memorable. Buy her chocolate and lovely flowers if that's her thing. Cook her favorite meal. Be more passionate about her than you have ever been.

A Wife's Perspective on Planning Honeymoon and Anniversary Vacations

I grew up in a home where I was saved and started going to church when I was about 6. My parents started coming to church later. I never knew my parents to be romantic and my husband tells me that his parents were not romantic either. Both couples have been together a long time but it's just being married, no fire and excitement. My parents never got away but they did send me away for one night before Christmas every year so they could get and hide presents. It wasn't a romantic getaway!

I was very pure and always wanted a husband but didn't know how to go looking other than the internet. There were no suitors at my church, and I didn't have an outgoing personality. I went on a Christian dating site and about a month later my to-be husband wrote me. My family was nervous about him at first but eventually came around to him. I was so excited when he proposed to me. Our life was all about the Lord and church and I couldn't wait to get married to him. I started planning almost immediately. Wedding dress (I could have got a better, more modest dress but only knew what I saw other people doing), getting some of my family to be bridesmaids, picking out the cute ring-bearer, preparing the decorations. It was so exciting, and he wouldn't tell me where we were going on our honeymoon. It took a while to get there but I couldn't wait to be with him forever and especially for our honeymoon. It wasn't what I expected. Don't get me wrong. We had a great time, but it could have been even greater. I was quite nervous but excited at the same time.

But there are some things I wish I had known. I didn't know I had a hymen and that it would break and cause so much pain. Then we got blood everywhere on the sheets. It made for a long night. It's hard to be romantic when you have a scary distraction like that. We were worried because of what the cabin owners would say and cleaning fees. We got up earlier than expected to try to get the stains out and were not totally successful. When we finally told the cabin owners, they said not to worry and that it happens all the time. What a relief!

Then we had to wait a few hours until we could check into our next cabin. When we arrived, it was smaller than we expected and we didn't know how to use everything. One part was really funny. My

husband walked in the bathroom while I was taking a shower and I jumped because I wasn't used to someone walking in like that! Later we learned showering together was quite romantic and enjoyable. We had a great time for the next few days, not getting out much and just spending time together. We were both ready to come home.

What would I suggest for young married couples, and especially women, for their honeymoon?

1. Learn to be romantic. I didn't know much about lingerie. I bought a little something at Walmart. I couldn't buy anything sexy on the internet because my family would be too nosy about the package that came. But I could have read a good book like Tim Lahaye's "Act of Marriage" or another couples book where I could have learned how to be more attractive to my husband. I could have put on perfume. We could have used massage oil, but we didn't even hear of that until we had been married several years. Now my husband gets excited anytime I wear new lingerie. I'm a strong believer in modest apparel but not for my husband when we are alone together. Get in the shower with him. Play with each other in the hot tub. If the place has a bathtub, give each other a bubble bath. Continue these things for your anniversaries.
2. Learn about your body beforehand. I was a pure virgin and I am glad I was and am thankful for a great teacher: my husband. But I should have read more about what to expect before our wedding.
3. Be sure to bring toothpaste and mouth wash, and practice good hygiene.
4. Take things slow for the first time. Do a lot of foreplay such as kissing and petting and touching. You are learning each inch of your spouse's body, a learning experience which takes years. Foreplay helps the wife to lubricate her vagina naturally and helps the husband to be aroused. Massage each other with oil or without it. Some couples use various jellies and lubricants to enhance their sexual experiences and you may want to bring some along so that he is able to enter you with less discomfort.
5. Be prepared for blood to be spilled for that first time especially. Maybe even bring your own towels so that no one sees the crimson results of your lovemaking. That way cleanup can be easy and no distractions so you can...
6. Enjoy your husband and ravish him!
7. Pray for God to bless your newfound marriage and to keep you passionate about each other "until death do you part".

When I married my husband, I married him for life. I couldn't imagine being with someone else. We made a sacred covenant together. We have a lot in common but there are some things we have both worked on over the years so that we can be better spouses to each other. And each year we try to celebrate our anniversary in some form or fashion. I regret some of the years and not getting away to be alone for a few days. Sometimes we haven't always observed our anniversary on the day or week of it and that's fine. We've often celebrated some time later when it was more convenient for someone to keep our kids for a day or two. One time we were gone a whole week and once for a five night trip but most of our anniversaries have been dates or 1 or 2 night stays somewhere.

How have we dealt with having anniversaries and what have we learned?

1. If you have kids, do what you can to have a good amount of alone time with your spouse. If you can't do it every year, strive the best you can to go when you can, even if not on your

anniversary week. We've celebrated a month later to even 4 months later. Once we celebrated our anniversary a month early.

2. Save money through the year for a special trip apart. Some people don't go anywhere because they have spent all their money on everything else. Sometimes you must sacrifice for quality time.
3. Take walks together while for are on your anniversary vacation. Talk to each other with minimal distractions. Reflect on your years together.
4. Go out for a meal or meals together, depending on how long you make your anniversary trip. On our last anniversary trip, we found a directory that listed some local restaurants in a quiet area. We ended up buying pizza twice, bringing it back to the cottage, and then played a romantic game together. It was some of the best pizza ever.
5. Games like The Discovery Game (supplied at the Little Stone Cottage.) You won't find much time or privacy to play it at home if you have kids, but you can laugh yourself silly and have a grand, fun time when it's just the two of you.
6. As with the honeymoon, privacy is key. This makes celebration freer and more intimate.