

Engaged

Getting Ready for Marriage



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Congratulations on this wonderful milestone. Few seasons in life are filled with as much joy and anticipation as the time spent preparing to get married.

You've probably heard it said that as you plan your wedding, you shouldn't forget to plan your marriage. But it sounds so abstract to "plan a marriage" in the midst of the more tangible (and demanding) project of planning a wedding. How do you do it?

STEP ONE: Learn from others

Research demonstrates the long-term value of making time now for marriage education classes or premarital counseling. Those efforts go even further when you supplement them by spending time with an older married couple whose relationship you admire.

STEP TWO: Plan with patience

Couples often overlook the importance of using the wedding planning season as practical marriage preparation. You can intentionally set the tone for your marriage by the values you live out in planning your big day. The transformational process of "becoming one" can occur in everything from how you assemble your guest list to how you determine a honeymoon destination.

STEP THREE: Discover the purpose of marriage

A wedding is bigger than you as an individual and even bigger than you both as a couple. Ephesians 5 describes a couple laying down their lives for one another and becoming one as an icon of God's sacrificial love for His church. That's the counter-cultural call of Christian marriage. Read *The Marriage Masterpiece* by Al Janssen in order to discover the beautiful picture God intends every marriage to reflect.

STEP FOUR: Create a meaningful event

To focus on the sacred nature of marriage in the early church couples often stood during the course of a weekly service to exchange their vows. Those weddings were a part of the community of faith's worship routine and a public vow within a church body.

They did not have anything resembling the grand ceremonies typical of modern weddings, focusing instead on the meaning and purpose of marriage. That's not to say big celebrations are out of order, but many risk making them so complex that they fail to honor God or the community they are uniting – both of which are the basis for a strong Christian marriage.

GOING FURTHER – Resources

Recommended Books:

The Marriage Masterpiece (by Al Janssen) The Bible opens and closes with a wedding and in between God uses the metaphor of marriage more than any other to describe His relationship with His people. So what does that mean for your pending marriage? Al Janssen tells the bigger story of marriage as God created it and as couples can experience it.

Before You Say “I Do” (by H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts) explores how to clarify role expectations, establish a healthy sexual relationship, handle finances, and acquire a solid understanding of how to develop a biblical relationship.

101 Questions to Ask Before You Get Engaged (by H. Norman Wright) noted couples counselor Norm Wright steers potential brides and grooms through a series of soul-searching, in-depth and personal questions to discern if they've really met “the One.”

Preparing for Marriage (by Dennis Rainey) This resource provides engaged couples opportunities to develop good communication skills and deal with issues of personal expectations, family histories, role responsibilities, communication, finances and the traits of a biblical marriage. The study can be used by counselors, groups or individual couples.

Recommended Books (continued):

When Sinners Say “I Do” (by Dave Harvey) Marriage is the union of two people who arrive at the altar toting some surprisingly large luggage. The Bible calls it sin and understanding its influence can make all the difference for a man and woman who are building a life together. Dave’s speaks honestly, and sometimes humorously, about sin and the power of the gospel to overcome it.

You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity” (by Francis & Lisa Chan) Setting aside typical topics on marriage, Francis and Lisa dive into Scripture to understand what it means to have a relationship that satisfies the deepest parts of our souls. Whether you are single, dating or married, this book will help you discover the adventure that you were made for and learn how to thrive in it.

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before – and After – You Marry (by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott) Questions at the end of every chapter help you explore each topic personally. Companion men’s and women’s workbooks full of self-tests and exercises help you apply what you learn and enjoy intimate discussions along the way. A DVD kit is also available.

Getting Ready for Marriage: A Practical Road Map for Your Journey Together (by Jim Burns & Doug Fields) Jim Burns and Doug Fields will uncover the essential elements for making marriages thrive. Filled with premium fuel for the journey – including meaningful exercises, hard truths, and conversation starters – this book will nourish and guide your relationship for the long haul.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

If you would like to speak to a minister about premarital counseling, please contact the church office at 972.727.8241 to set up an appointment.

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