

Getting Ready for Marriage

*From Lora Doremus, Director of Women's Ministries
With Kurt Bruner, The Center For Strong Families*

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. 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 marriage 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.

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; instead, they focused 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:

These titles are available to check out from the UBC Library or to preview at The Porch. Additional titles on this subject are also available in the Library.

Love and Respect (by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs) discusses a powerful Biblical model for each spouse understanding and meeting the other's most deeply felt need.

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.

What Did You Expect?: Redeeming the Realities of Marriage (by Paul David Tripp) introduces a Biblical and practical approach to the realities of marriage that are rooted in God's faithfulness and Scripture's teaching on sin and grace.

It Starts At Home (by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope) upholds marriage and family as the proving ground for lasting success and provides a clear purpose, an effective strategy, and a simple plan for couples, parents, grandparents, and church leaders in the movement toward intentionality in the home.

Sacred Marriage (by Gary Thomas) discusses how your marriage is more than a sacred covenant with another person. It is a spiritual discipline designed to help you know God better, trust him more fully, and love him more deeply.

Engaged

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Boundaries in Marriage (by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend) explains that only when a husband and wife know and respect each other's needs, choices, and freedom can they give themselves freely and lovingly to one another.

Recommended Website:

CoupleCheckup.com features the Prepare & Enrich tools for dating and engaged couples who want to establish a strong foundation for marriage.

Church Support

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