

Getting Ready for Marriage

From Jeff Thibault, Pastor of Marriage and Family
With Kurt Bruner, The Center for StrongFamilies

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

(*Available at the HomePointe Center, or HPC library check out)

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 Get Engaged*** (By Dave Gudgel) offers priceless advice and direction for daters who are considering popping (or answering) the big question. Author and pastor Dave Gudgel teams with his son, Brent, and Brent's girlfriend to discuss the twelve relational indicators indispensable to a healthy, lasting marriage.

****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.

The Two Shall Become One (by Henry and Marilyn Jeffcoat) provides a practical guide for a wedding planning season focused on marriage preparation and crafting a meaningful ceremony.

Recommended Website:

FullMarriageExperience.com features articles and resources on a range of premarital issues including mentoring, the value of premarital counseling and online assessments.

GOING FURTHER – North Bible Church

Pre-marital counseling

If you do not have a relationship with a North Bible Church staff person who will be conducting your wedding and wish to go through pre-marital counseling, contact Jeff Thibault at the North Bible Church office – 480-607-5097.

North Bible Church Weddings

For information on scheduling a wedding at North Bible Church contact Sharon Smith at the North Bible Church office – 480-607-5091.

NorthBibleChurch.com

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