

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.

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

Engaged

Getting Ready for Marriage



First Baptist Church

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Getting Ready for Marriage

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.

Premarital Counseling

The Bible teaches that marriage is a beautiful gift given from God to a man and a woman for the purpose of bringing Him glory and making us holy. Godly marriage is a parable (earthly story with a heavenly meaning) that mirrors Christ's relationship with the church. (Ephesians 5:31-33) Knowing this, First Baptist Church takes very seriously its responsibility to shepherd couples who are moving towards marriage. The pastor would love to meet with you for premarital counseling opportunities.

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.