

Premarital Discussion Guide

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Congratulations and best wishes as you plan for your wedding! A wedding is a special ceremony in which a man and woman come together to ask God's blessing on their new life as husband and wife. Therefore, it is especially important that the bride and groom carefully consider God's plan for marriage as well as some potential points of tension in the future. Before making any further plans, please consider several important policies:

- ❖ Two one-hour conferences with the bride and groom are required in order to discuss matters relating to the basic understanding of marriage, as well as plans for the wedding ceremony. Also, a follow-up meeting (about six months after the wedding) is highly recommended. Several premarital self-study guides can also be recommended (for example, *Before You Say "I Do,"* by H. Norman Wright & Wes Roberts).
- ❖ The church building can be used by members of the Four Lakes Church of Christ and their immediate families. Otherwise, weddings can take place just about anywhere. Please contact me for some unique ideas.
- ❖ The bride and groom must both be Scripturally eligible to be married (getting married for the first time, or all prior marriages ended either by death or divorce due to sexual sin—only the innocent person can get remarried). Any questions can be answered during the first premarital discussion (mentioned above). See Matthew 19:3-12.
- ❖ The bride and groom must not be living together in a sexual relationship before marriage. If this is the case, they must agree to separate and abstain from intimacy until the time of the wedding (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).
- ❖ The wedding license must be in the hands of the minister at least three full days before the ceremony.
- ❖ If one of the principal members of the wedding party arrives under the influence of alcohol, at the discretion of the evangelist, the wedding will be cancelled. Anyone else under the influence of alcohol will be asked to leave the premises.
- ❖ When a couple decides to get married, it seems like everyone has an opinion as to what should take place at the ceremony. However, the minister will only listen to the bride and groom. Relationships are more important than ceremonies. A wedding lasts 15 minutes. A marriage lasts a lifetime. Please remember that the only things necessary for a wedding in Wisconsin are a bride, a groom, a license, a minister, and two witnesses. Anything else (expensive dresses, extravagant flowers, etc.) is simply ornament and is unnecessary for a beautiful and moving ceremony.



"Before I marry you, I have a couple of requirements: Two counseling sessions with my wife and me, and two times babysitting our kids."

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The materials in this packet are intended as a guide for your upcoming premarital discussion. **Please read and complete the discussion guides separately and return them to me before we meet together.** This will give you an idea of what we will discuss during our meeting. Your answers will be completely confidential, and you can keep the worksheets after our discussion. Enjoy the questions, and feel free to discuss your answers with one another only after the sheets have been completed. Remember, you are supposed to have different answers to these questions—you are two different people! Complete agreement on every issue may indicate a lack of authenticity, fear of intimacy, or an inability to communicate.

Please call me if you have any special questions or concerns. May God bless you as you plan for your wedding.

Bride: _____ Bride's Phone: _____ Bride's E-mail: _____

Groom: _____ Groom's Phone: _____ Groom's E-mail: _____

Proposed Wedding Date: _____

God's Law on Marriage

Matthew 19:3-12

³ Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"⁴ And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no one separate."⁷ They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?"⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way."⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."¹⁰ The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."¹¹ But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given."¹² For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it."

What is the meaning of the passage quoted above?

Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹ ...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. ²² Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

In view of the above passage, please summarize the relationship between the husband and wife:

General Information

1. My main goal in life is...
2. What are you passionate about?
3. What makes you happy?
4. What makes you mad?
5. What makes you feel better when you are sad?
6. What are you most proud of about yourself?
7. How do you recharge your emotional batteries?
8. If you could be different in any way, what changes would you make?
9. What are your educational goals?
10. What is necessary for you to have a happy home?
11. Have you fully disclosed your health histories, both physical and mental?
12. Do you have a criminal record?
13. Have you discussed domestic violence, child abuse, pornography, and abortion?
14. What will be different about your relationship after the wedding day?
15. What hurdles do you foresee that you will need to overcome as a married couple?
16. In light of what is happening to many marriages today, why will yours be different?

17. In what ways do you expect your partner to change after marriage?
18. What will it mean for you if changes do not take place in the way you expect?
19. How can the differences between you and your partner strengthen your marriage?
20. List three reasons for marrying your partner:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
21. Why is this the right time in your life to get married?
22. Marriage is for those who are mature. What evidence of maturity do you see in yourself and your partner?
23. List three expectations you will have of your partner once you are married:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
24. Do you have similar views toward the use of alcohol and tobacco?

Communication

25. Is my partner understanding and affectionate to the degree that I need and expect?
26. When do you feel distant from your partner?
27. What are some things about which you do not seem able to communicate?
28. Can we comfortably and openly discuss our physical needs, preferences, and fears?
29. Does your partner try to see your side of things?

30. Does your partner consider your opinion in making decisions?
31. Do you help your partner understand you by telling him or her how you think and feel?
32. Do you expect your partner to share all of his or her secrets with you? Why or why not? What kind of issues would be acceptable to keep secret?
33. Even when he or she does not say so, I know my partner...
 - ...is happy when...
 - ...is anxious when...
 - ...is preoccupied when...
 - ...is sad when...
 - ...is in love with me when...
 - ...will be a good mate when...
 - ...is disappointed in me when...

Conflict

34. Does your partner have any annoying habits or mannerisms?
35. Can you handle another person (even one you love) in “your space”?
36. True or False (circle one): We have some disagreements that never seem to get resolved. Explain:
37. Have you discussed how eventual differences of opinion will be handled?
38. How do you foresee forgiveness operating in a marriage?
39. How do you express anger?
40. Have you ever hit someone?
41. How do you expect your spouse to express anger?

Intimacy

42. Will you continue “dating” one another (showing kindness and courtesy) even after the wedding?
43. How would you like feelings of love, warmth, and tenderness shown to you in public and in your home?
44. Have we discussed our sexual health?
45. Do you have similar views concerning the use of birth control?
46. Will you be comfortable discussing intimate issues with one another (sexual likes and dislikes, etc.)?
47. How will you respond and deal with it if, after you are married, another person is attracted to you and approaches you?

Money

48. Do you agree concerning who will be primarily responsible for paying the bills?
49. Will the bill-payer completely control the finances?
50. Do you have similar styles of spending and saving?
51. What is your attitude toward the use of credit cards and other forms of credit (including house loan, car loans, student loans, etc.)?
52. Do you currently have any outstanding debts or financial commitments?
53. Will you have a budget? If so, how will it be determined?
54. How will you decide on major purchases? What is a major purchase?
55. How much money from your family finances should your partner be able to spend without your permission? How did you arrive at this figure?

56. Do you expect your partner to tell you the amount of money spent on a shopping spree or on an outing with friends?
57. What will your savings plan look like?
58. How will you decide how much money will be given to God?
59. How do each of you create value besides earning income?

Time Management

60. How do you currently enjoy spending your free time?
61. Once you are married, how do you foresee spending your free time (days off, evenings, weekends)?
62. What is your idea of the perfect vacation?
63. When do you plan on traveling to visit with family (and how often)? Where will you spend holidays?
64. Do you ever feel pressured to participate in activities that your partner enjoys?
65. Do you engage in all activities together, or is it acceptable to separate for the evening or a weekend?

Work

66. What are your career goals?
67. How do you deal with job stress?
68. Are you grumpy or emotionally unavailable because you bring your work home—or work from home?
69. Do you carry a pager or cell phone for work? How will this kind of interruption affect your family life?
70. If one of you were to be offered a career opportunity in a location far from the other's family, are you prepared to move?

Friends and Other Relationships

71. Who are your friends (list at least three, and explain why they are your friends):
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
72. Who are your partner's friends (list at least three, and explain what you appreciate about them):
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
73. Do you have any concerns about your partner's friends? Explain.
74. How do you foresee friendships changing once you are married?
75. Do you have friends of the opposite gender? If so, how will these relationships change after marriage?
76. What type of relationship do you want your partner to have with your friends?

Roles and Expectations

77. Do both of you agree concerning who will be the head of the house? What does this mean to you?
78. Is there "women's work" and "men's work" in a household? Explain.
79. Discuss the following tasks and explain who will be primarily responsible:
- Buying groceries
 - Maintaining the car(s)
 - Yard work
 - Cooking
 - Doing the laundry
 - Home repairs
 - Washing dishes
 - Cleaning bathrooms
 - Collecting trash
 - Dusting
 - Vacuuming
 - Making the bed
 - Interior decorating
 - Picking up clutter

Children

80. What do you expect it will be like to be a parent?
81. What do you expect of your partner as a parent?
82. Have you discussed the possibility of infertility, birth defects, unplanned pregnancies, or other options such as fostering or adopting?
83. What family traditions do you want to carry on, and what new ones do you want to create?
84. Who do you admire as a parent? Why?
85. When children come, will you be able to live on one salary, or will both of you be employed? If both of you will be employed, what are your plans for child care?
86. What is your view concerning the education of any future children you may have (public school, private school, home schooling, paying for college, etc.)?

Spirituality

87. What are your views on faith and God?
88. What are your views on church involvement (including regular attendance at religious functions)?
89. How has God been a part of your relationship so far?
90. Will there be any religious differences between you? If so, please explain:
91. How will children be raised religiously, and who will be primarily responsible for religious training?
92. Share a scripture that is especially meaningful to you. Explain.
93. How do your spiritual beliefs affect your daily life?

