



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.

As you plan your wedding and honeymoon, don'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 investing time now for premarital counseling or marriage education classes. Those efforts go even further when you spend time with an older married couple whose relationship you admire. Don't put this off until right before the wedding.

STEP TWO: Prefer one another

Philippians 2:3-4 tells us to consider others' needs and desires before our own. Attention to this principle will resolve 99% of conflict in marriage. Begin this lifelong pursuit now. Ask each other, "How can I serve you?" This is especially important when it comes to wedding planning. You can intentionally set the tone for your marriage by practicing unselfishness when 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 meaning and purpose 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. That's not to say big celebrations are out of order, but be careful you don't make them so complex that they fail to honor God or the community they are uniting –the basis and support for a strong Christian marriage

Going Further - Resources

Premarital Counseling

Call or stop by the church office to pick up a premarital counseling packet. We love to help you invest in the long-term success of your marriage.

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.
- *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.
- *The Five Love Languages* (by Gary Chapman) gives practical ways to understand your spouse and express love in a way they will really hear.