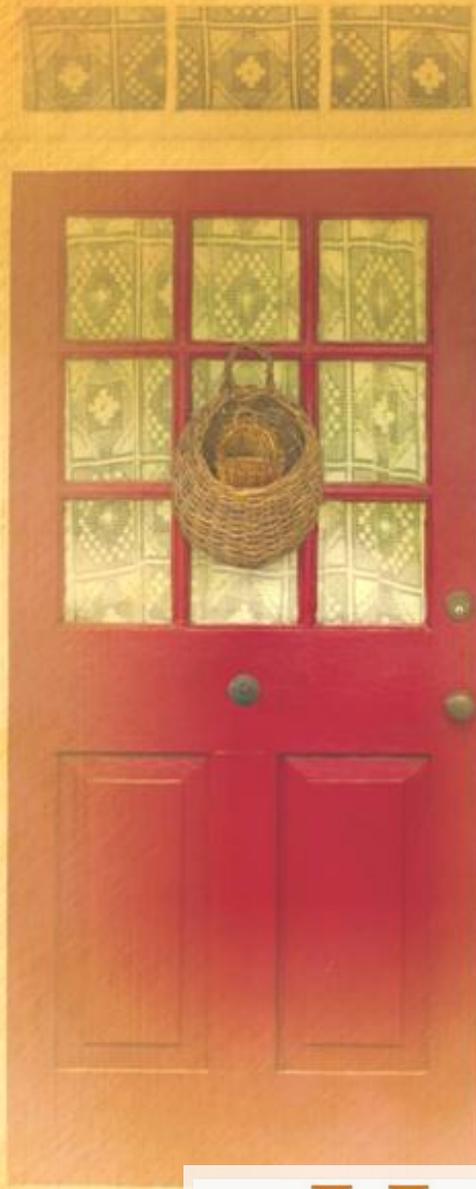


Engaged

Getting Ready for Marriage



@Home 

Painters

Getting Ready for Marriage

From 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. 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

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.

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.

Also, available in the FBC Library for check-out:

Blueprints for a Solid Marriage by Dr. Steve Stephens

Making Love Last Forever by Dr. Gary Smalley

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

What Wives Wish their Husbands Knew about Women by Dr. James Dobson

What Husbands Wish their Wives Knew about Men by Patrick M. Morley

Recommended Website:

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

GOING FURTHER - Church Support

Adult Sunday School Bible study groups offer a great place for men and women, single or married, to meet other adults and develop healthy relationships. These are ongoing groups that meet each Sunday morning, and often share in times of fellowship and ministry outside the class setting.

Marriage-related events at FBC, such as marriage-enrichment seminars or classes, are typically designed for engaged as well as married couples. The essence of what is covered in these type events will help provide a solid pre-marital foundation for a biblical marriage relationship for adults who plan to marry.

Through our **on-line equipping resource, RightNow Training**, engaged couples can access a number of video-driven "short courses" on a variety of marriage-related topics. These can be powerful teaching segments, as well as great discussion starters between engaged partners. Perhaps best of all, you can access them at your convenience, any time of day from anywhere you have Internet access, including a smart phone. E-mail keith@fbcterrell.org if you'd like to sign-up for access to RightNow Training. There's no cost to you, and you'll have access to thousands of resources and study courses on all types of topics.