



Pre-Marriage **BASICS**

— PURSUEGOD EDITION —

Overview:

Learn God's design for marriage and three basic principles for a healthy, life-long marriage. Workbook includes couples' survey and sample wedding order.

Lessons:

1. God's Design For Marriage
2. Pre-Marriage Basics #1: Love is a Choice, Not Just a Feeling
3. Pre-Marriage Basics #2: Trust is Earned, Not Freely Given
4. Pre-Marriage Basics #3: Healthy Couples Keep Talking





THREE PILLARS OF A HEALTHY *Marriage*

CHOOSE LOVE

EARN TRUST

KEEP TALKING



COUPLE'S SURVEY

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Instructions: Rate yourself and your spouse (or fiancée) on a scale of 1-10 for each item.

YOU

CHARACTER

Teachable and eager to learn

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Willing to emphasize the positive in every situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Free from life-controlling habits or issues

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Care about other people and their growth

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LOVE

Personal commitment to your marriage

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Ability to put your spouse above yourself

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How strong your parents' marriage was

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TRUST

Ability to trust others

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Trustworthiness (how much trust you've earned)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Willingness to forgive

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

COMMUNICATION

How well you express your thoughts/feelings

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How eager you are to engage in conflict

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How quick you are to get angry or invalidate

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

YOUR SPOUSE

CHARACTER

Teachable and eager to learn

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Willing to emphasize the positive in every situation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Free from life-controlling habits or issues

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Care about other people and their growth

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LOVE

Personal commitment to your marriage

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Ability to put your spouse above yourself

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How strong your parents' marriage was

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GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/premarriage

TALKING POINTS

We didn't invent the concept of marriage, it was God's idea. His purpose and design for marriage is found in the Bible. If you want your marriage to be healthy and strong, follow the blueprints God provided.

- Marriage is defined biblically as _____ man and _____ woman joined together for life. Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6
- At marriage you become "one" with your spouse. But this new "couples identity" doesn't require you to _____ your individual identities. Psalm 139:13-15
- Your family of _____ had a major impact on who you are today. For some, "leaving and cleaving" may be a difficult task.

DISCUSSION

1. Read Genesis 2:24. What's the significance of two people becoming one in marriage? What do you think that means practically?
2. What happens when one or both are selfish in the marriage?
3. Briefly describe your family of origin. What did your family teach you about marriage? Who do you think will struggle more with separating from their family? Explain.
4. What do you think your "couple identity" will look like once you're married? What hobbies will you share and what will you pursue individually?
5. Read Matthew 19:4-6. What do you think about divorce? How have you seen it cause damage among couples and families?
6. Make sure to take the Couple Survey (pg.3) before your next meeting.

LOVE IS A CHOICE, NOT JUST A FEELING

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/premarriage

TALKING POINTS

If you're working from a faulty definition of love, your marriage will be missing the foundation it needs to last a lifetime.

- Modern culture depicts love as a _____ that comes and goes. Many couples use this unrealistic standard to measure the quality of love in their marriage.
- The _____ paints a different picture for marital love: Love is a _____, not just a feeling. Love is based on a promise and is represented by our marriage vows. Proverbs 20:25
- The ultimate analogy for love is how Christ loves his _____. He gave up his life for his “_____” even though he didn’t feel like it. Ephesians 5:25-27

DISCUSSION

1. Review the Couple’s Survey. Highlight any discrepancies or areas of concern.
2. Describe how you think our culture (through entertainment or popular opinion) views love and marriage. How might those views be fueling the divorce rate in our country?
3. Make two lists: (1) good feelings you’ve felt in your relationship (2) bad feelings you’ve felt in your relationship. How have those feelings helped and hurt your relationship?
4. Read Proverbs 20:25. Do you think most couples understand the commitment they’re making on their wedding day? Explain. Review the common vows you hear in a wedding. Why do we choose to say those things?
5. Read Ephesians 5:25-27. What did Christ do to set his bride (the Church) apart? List some sacrifices you anticipate making once you’re married. Explain your list.
6. Homework: Watch the 5 love languages to discover your love languages and come next session with some practical ways you will start speaking your partner’s love language.

TRUST IS EARNED, NOT FREELY GIVEN

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TALKING POINTS

Choosing love will lead to a life-long marriage, but it'll feel like bondage without a daily commitment to earning trust.

- Trust is relying on the _____ or ability of another person. Your ability to truly trust someone is based on _____ character, not yours. Deuteronomy 7:9
- Trust is _____, not freely given. That's why every spouse needs to work hard to earn trust from their spouse everyday.
- Trust is reactive and measurable. Building trust happens _____ over time, like building up a savings account.
- Trust is reactive, but forgiveness is _____. Extending forgiveness opens the door to restoring broken trust. Colossians 3:12-13

DISCUSSION

1. Review the definition of trust. What is the basis of trust? Describe a time you gave trust to someone who hadn't proved their integrity to you? What was the result?
2. Identify one area where you've had a hard time trusting your fiancé. Why has it been hard to trust them? Identify an area where your fiancé has a hard time trusting you? Why?
3. Review the 3 components to trust (reactive, measurable, takes time). Think about that area where your fiancé has a hard time trusting you. How will you incorporate these components to start building that trust?
4. Read Deuteronomy 7:9. What does it say about God that He is willing to earn our trust? Share ways God has earned your trust.
5. Read Colossians 3:12-13. What role does forgiveness play in earning trust? Is there an area where you need to extend forgiveness to your fiancé, even if he/she still has trust to earn?
6. Homework: Watch What's Your Apology Language? Be ready to share your insights at your next meeting.

NOTES

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HEALTHY COUPLES KEEP TALKING

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/premarriage

TALKING POINTS

Love and trust are great, but without the practical skill of good communication, your marriage might not go the distance.

- Healthy couples keep _____, even when it leads to conflict. Fighting is good and helpful if you do it the right way.
Ephesians 4:29
- Avoid the three unhealthy "_____ Languages": escalation, withdrawal, and invalidation. These habits become the issues that _____ you from talking about the issue you're trying to solve.
- Healthy communicators use "I feel...because" statements instead of _____ fingers at their spouse. Learn to be an active listener and work together to find _____.

DISCUSSION

1. How did your parents fight? What did their example teach you about conflict?
2. On a scale from 1-10, when you argue how often do you feel like your fiancé doesn't understand your point of view? In your opinion, what contributes to the breakdown?
3. What's your primary "Fight Language"? How has that gotten you into trouble in the past?
4. Read Ephesians 4:29. On a scale from 1-10, rate your ability to use your words constructively. In what ways can you improve?
5. Review the good habits of communication. Which skill do you need to work on the most? How can those skills help you the next time you have a conflict?
6. Why are action steps important in resolving conflict? What is likely to happen if you don't formulate a plan?
7. Homework: Peruse the other topics found in the #premarriage tab and choose a few more topics to do either as a couple or with your marriage mentors.

NOTES

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SAMPLE WEDDING ORDER AND VOWS

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Pre-service music:

Song 1:

- Parents/Grandparents enter
- Wedding Party enters
- Ringbearer/flowergirl(s) enter

Song 2:

- Bride enters with father

To the father: "Who gives this woman?"

Opening Prayer

Brief Message

Love is a choice, not just a feeling

- It's a covenant, a promise.
- **1 Cor 13:4** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5** It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **8** Love never fails.
- **Eph 5:25** For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her...

Trust is earned, not freely given

- Trustworthiness is the goal.
- **Deut 7:9** Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him.

Healthy couples keep talking

- Helps you stay on the same page.
- **Eph 4:29** Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.



SAMPLE WEDDING ORDER AND VOWS

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Declaration of Intent

_____, do you take _____ to be your wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honor her and keep her, and forsaking all others remain loyal to her as long as you both shall live? If so, say "I do".

Wedding Vows (adapted)

In the sight of God and these witnesses,

I _____ take you _____, to be my wife (husband),
to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death.
I take you, with all your faults and strengths, as I offer myself to you,
with all my faults and strengths. I choose you, as my friend and love.
This is my solemn vow.

The Exchange of rings:

_____ I give you this ring, as a symbol of our vows, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, With this ring, I thee wed.

Song 3:

- ☐ Lighting of Candles
- ☐ Unity Sand
- ☐ Communion

Prayer

Declaration

In as much as you have each pledged to the other your lifelong commitment, love and devotion, and by the power vested in me by the state of _____ and the scriptures of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, I now pronounce you husband and wife, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.

_____, you may kiss your bride!

Presentation of the couple

Song 4:

Recessional