

# 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. 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. Consider beginning the habit of a weekly date night or times of intentional connection to set a foundation for your marriage.

## **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. Consider reading one of the books suggested in the Going Further section together to deepen your understanding of the larger purpose of your union.

## **STEP FOUR: Create a Meaningful Event**

Our culture today can often put more emphasis on "the big day" than preparing for a lifetime together. 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.

During this special time of engagement, be intentional to draw close to the Lord and to each other as you establish a firm foundation for your marriage.

## GOING FURTHER – Resources

*United in Christ: Preparation for Christian Marriage-Milestones* (by Scott Stiegemeier) examines what God teaches about marriage, relationships, and family and helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of a relationship. A copy of this book is provided to all couples in pre-marital counseling at ILM. Available at [cph.org](http://cph.org).

*This Momentary Marriage* (John Piper) Reflecting on over forty years of matrimony, John Piper exalts the biblical meaning of marriage over its emotion, exhorting couples to keep their covenant as a display of Christ's covenant-keeping love for the church. Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

*Sacred Marriage* (by Gary Thomas) doesn't just offer techniques to make a marriage happier, but, also contains practical tools, to help married Christians in becoming holier husbands and wives. Provides help with insights from Scripture, church history, time tested wisdom from Christian classics, and examples from today's marriages. Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

*Each for the Other, Marriage as It's Meant to Be* (Bryan Chapell and Kathy Chapell) shows married couples how to emulate the unselfish, sacrificial love of Christ. While imparting invaluable instruction grounded in Scripture, Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

*101 Questions to ask Before You Get Engaged* (by H. Norman Wright) steers potential brides and grooms through a series of soul-searching questions to discern if they've really met "the One." Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

*When Sinners Say "I Do": Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage* (by Dave Harvey) is about encountering the life-transforming power of the gospel in the unpredictable journey of marriage. Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

## GOING FURTHER Immanuel Lutheran Ministries

**Immanuel Lutheran Ministries Pre-Marital Counseling and Weddings**  
For information on scheduling pre-marital counseling and weddings at ILM contact the church office at 254-773-3898 to meet with a pastor.

**Information and Resources** are available at the At Home With God Center at both campuses or by going to [www.ilmtexas.org/AHWG](http://www.ilmtexas.org/AHWG).

# Engaged

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**AT HOME WITH GOD**  
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