

God and Your *Pre-Marriage*



*“So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what
God has joined together, let man not separate.”*

Matthew 19:6

Prepared by Pastor Dave Brown

WEDDING SERVICES

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding and marriage! This packet contains information regarding the Pastor's guidelines and goals for conducting wedding services.

The Pastor considers a wedding to be a service of worship given to the glory of God. The Pastor offers this service in thanksgiving to God and in honor of the couple to be married. The Pastor has the right to refuse to conduct the ceremony if his biblical convictions are violated. The following information is provided to you so that your wedding ceremony will be a meaningful and spiritual experience.

A service of Christian marriage is provided for couples who wish to dedicate their marriage in an act of worship before God. The ceremony will be a witness unto God that this is a Christian service through the sharing of Scripture, prayer and exchange of vows. Everything that is done during the ceremony is for the glory of God.

The marriage vows and the exchange of rings are a solemn vow before God. The marriage covenant is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, but thoughtfully and prayerfully. Premarital counseling is required of all couples desiring to be married. This packet contains the premarital counseling content and topics of discussion from a biblical perspective.

Family and friends who come to celebrate your wedding ceremony are encouraged to be active participants rather than passive witnesses. They give their blessing to you and your marriage by their presence, prayers and words of encouragement.

On behalf of the investment of time and preparations for pre-marital counseling and the wedding ceremony, set fees may be discussed with the Pastor concerning church policy.

Marriage: Am I Prepared?

The greatest reality in life is that God exists and he created you with purpose. God designed you to be in relationship with himself. Your whole created purpose is to grow in a relationship with the God of the universe. To miss this reality is to miss out on all that life was meant to be. So, in a sense, your first marriage starts when you have committed your life to Jesus Christ. If you have never done this, would you consider taking a first step in asking a pastor or trusted Christian friend to explain to you what it means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

Not only has God created you to be in relationship with himself but he also created marriage between man and woman. Just as he has design and purpose in life, he does so in marriage. This is why marriage is not to be entered into lightly.

My goal as a pastor (and our church's goal) is not just to conduct weddings but also to empower marriages with the sustaining life they are meant to enjoy. The only lasting empowerment in marriage is that both individuals in a marriage commit to living for Jesus Christ. He is the sure foundation that families can build their lives upon.

In preparing for your marriage let me ask you...

- **Do you believe you are biblically qualified for this marriage?**
 - Are you both committed to lifelong honor and love to each other as husband and wife? (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:31-32)
 - Are you both believers in Jesus Christ? (1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)
 - Are you both living to please God, Christ as Lord? Are you co-habiting? (2 Corinthians 5:9, 14-15)
Note: If you are co-habiting be honest and speak with Pastor about next steps.
 - Have either of you been divorced?
Note: the answer to this question may or may not Biblically disqualify you from future marriage. (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24)

- **Do you have a sense of God's timing for this marriage?**
 - Spiritually – Are you both committed to each other's spiritual growth?
 - Emotionally – Are you ready to share your life with this person?
 - Relationally – Are your parents in support of this marriage? Have you discussed previous relationships?
 - Directionally – Do you share the same goals and expectations of marriage? Agreed priorities, place of residence, number of children, etc.
 - Economically – Are you financially ready for marriage?

In preparing for your marriage you will read and sign a Wedding Guidelines Contract with Severna Park Baptist Church. This information gives information about costs and other guidelines regarding your wedding ceremony.

In preparing for your marriage you will commit to 4 weeks of premarital training/counseling. These sessions will discuss "Marriage: Am I Prepared?" "Marriage: God's Idea", "Marriage: God's Blueprints".

TO DO BEFORE NEXT SESSION:

- ✓ Review the above questions together. How do these questions relate to your marriage & love commitment?
- ✓ Read Genesis 1-3. Write down anything significant you read or any questions you may have.
- ✓ Be prepared to share your engagement story.

MARRIAGE: GOD'S IDEA

Marriage is a good gift from a great God. Since the first marriage (**Genesis 1-3**), God has designed a plan and purpose for what marriage should look like and develop. Unfortunately, our society often neglects God's blueprint for this foundational part of life. It is not by accident that the divorce rate soars, family conflict abounds and lives are filled with emotional agony. This is all a result of ignoring God's foundational idea for marriage.

This study will help you build a foundation for your marriage. You will discover that marriage was not an afterthought in God's creation but was designed with great care and compassion. Most importantly, in preparing for your marriage, I hope your heart and mind will be stirred toward knowing the only One who can truly bring eternal satisfaction in your life.

God is the Architect of marriage.

Genesis 2:18, 21-22 *"The Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him... But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man."*

The man has a work to labor (Genesis 2:15)

The man has an responsibility to lead (Genesis 2:16-17)

The man has a woman to love (Genesis 2:23-24)

God's plan for marriage is oneness; with spouse and God.

Genesis 2:23-24 *"The man said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."*

Hosea 2:16, 19a *"In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'... I will betroth you to me forever."*

Isaiah 62:5b *"As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."*

Marriage is foundational stewardship for creation (Genesis 1:27-28)

Marriage is heterosexual ("a man and his wife" Genesis 2:24)

Marriage is exclusive ("a man will be united [glued] to wife" Genesis 2:24)

- Exclusive in leaving parents, not so much location as referring to loyalty in a new relationship.
- Exclusive in terms of monogamous (not polygamous) partners for life.

Marriage is covenantal life-long ("bone of bone, flesh of flesh", "become one flesh" Genesis 2:23-24)

Marriage is complementarian interdependence but independent with roles (Gen 2:15, 20-23)

Marriage is a cultivation of each others relationship before God (naked without shame Genesis 2:25)

Satan disrupts God's plan for oneness.

Genesis 3

3:1,4 Satan spreads doubt on God's Word.

3:1 Satan slights God's role assignment.

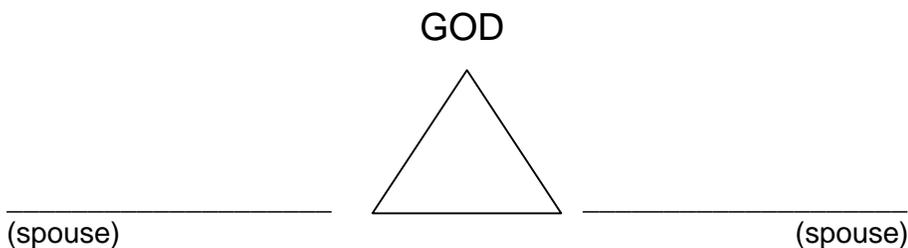
3:8-19 Satan separates man from God.

The world we live in is not a perfect place, in fact it is a profoundly broken world. Genesis 3 describes "The Fall" of humanity and mankind has never been the same since. God's idea for marriage was perfect peace and harmony between himself and his people. However, the freedom of human choice separated the ability to sustain such peace. Adam & Eve rebelled against God just as much as your own heart does at given times.

Gary Thomas in Sacred Marriage writes: "Husbands, you are married to a fallen woman in a broken world. Wives, you are married to a sinful man in a sinful world. It is guaranteed that your spouse will sin against you, disappoint you, and have physical limitations that will frustrate and sadden you. He may come home with the best intentions and still lose his temper. She may have all of the desire but none of the energy. This is a fallen world... You will never find a spouse who is not affected in some way by the reality of the Fall." (p. 69)

Or in other words, if you are entering marriage to make you happy then you better not get married! Marriage is not designed to make you happy but it is designed to give you an opportunity to grow closer to the reason you were created.

The triangle below also illustrates this point:



Is your life pointed in the direction of God?

Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Write out how you came to have a personal relationship. Use these questions to help you:

How old was I when I accepted Jesus as Lord & Savior?

How did I realize my need for a Savior?

Who shared with me the gospel and what Jesus did for me by dying on the cross?

How am I currently growing in my relationship with Jesus?

Marriage: God's Blueprints

Your marriage is an earthly relationship pointing to an eternal relationship.

The marriage relationship points to the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph 5:25-32, Isaiah 54:5, Revelation 19:7-9). Christ demonstrates his love for the Church in love through sacrificial death, and by nurturing the church through the Scriptures. Therefore, husbands and wives are to demonstrate the same unconditional love and nurturing character in their relationship. Even more, the permanency of marriage is valued above all.

What would you say is the purpose of marriage? Your beliefs about marriage point to beliefs about God's relationship with His bride – the Church.

Your marriage partner was chosen under the sovereign hand of God.

God is involved in the selection of a spouse (Gen 24; Prov 19:14), even when the relationship may be unequally spiritually yoked (1 Cor 7). However, God is not the author of sin. The point is that God knew who you would marry before you did, so allow your marriage to grow in your love for each other as your love is shaped by God's love.

How would you describe your spouse to a stranger?

What qualities found in your parents do you want to emulate? Avoid?

Your marriage is one of God's ways to bring about your spiritual growth.

Marriage is the union of two sinners under the sovereignty and grace of God. God joins people together for his sovereign purpose, more specifically, to bring about each person's spiritual growth. The marriage relationship is one of God's ways to bring this about (1 Cor 6:12-20; 1 Thess 4:1-8; Prov 27:6, 17). Ultimately, your earthly marriage is pre-Marital training for your heavenly marriage to Jesus Christ (Matt 22:1-14, 22:30, 25:1-13, Eph 5:32; also see #1 above). Therefore, when conflict occurs view it as an opportunity for spiritual growth towards God and your spouse (Rom 8:28-30).

What character qualities do you most/least admire about your spouse?

How do you normally handle conflict? (Confrontational, Passive)
What are some things that make you angry? How do you typically respond when angry?

Why do you think the words "I'm sorry" important in a lasting marriage?

Communication Tips

- Listen with your ears: "Mirroring" or repeating what is said. Ask questions and clarify content.
- Listen with your eyes: Body language and eye contact displays care and value.
- Speak with your hands: How you say something is as important as what you say.
- Speak with your heart: Be honest, sincere, loving and develop trust.
- Open issues: compromise
- Closed issues: confront

Your marriage is sustained by God's grace from faith in Christ and God's Word.

God's grace holds marriages together as two sinners seek to please God (Eph 2:8-10; Col 1:17; 2 Cor 5:9, 14-15). Both individuals must not depend on their own abilities or wisdom to satisfy the marriage but must depend on God and his Word (Ps 127:1; Matt 4:4; 1 Cor 3:11). You can do nothing apart from Jesus Christ (Jn 15:5).

What role will Scripture and prayer play in your marriage?

How can a church help support & strengthen your marriage?

Your marriage is designed by God with unique roles for each spouse.

"The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation." – Quoted from the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 article XVIII (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Pet 3:1-7; Titus 2:4-5).

Submission does not mean

- Lesser value or worth
- Husband is in place of Christ
- Wife gives up freedom or independent thought
- Wife gives up influence of husband or gives in to every demand/expectation

Submission does mean

- Trust, as Jesus submitted to Father or Sarah with Abraham
- Respect

Husbands are designed to love profoundly and lead sacrificially & spiritually

Wives are designed to support & shape ("helpmate", nurturing offspring), submit (trust), and respect.

What expectations do you have for each other as husband and wife? Be practical and specific to communicate desires, not demands, that can be discussed.

Your marriage is God's designed outlet for sexual fulfillment and protection against sexual immorality.

God is the creator of sex as he has created everything. Sex can be a way to put the other spouse first in the marriage (Php 2:3-4; Mk 10:45). All forms of sexual fulfillment outside of your marriage are sin (1 Cor 6:18, 7:1-5). God desires marriages to be faithful just as he is faithful to the covenant he has with the church (Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 6:15-20; Eph 5:25-32). Sexual intimacy in marriage is for each spouse's protection against sin and immorality (1 Cor 7:1-5). Married couples should honor God and each other in their sexual intimacy.

Relational Tips

- Attention with time
- Affirmation with word & deed
- Affection with touch
- Adventure with experiences
- Accordance with dreams, goals, purpose

Men are like M _____ (event)
Women are like O _____ (experience)

Make a list of boundaries to "affair proof" your marriage. Share lists.

Your marriage is God's primary foundation for procreation and raising children.

God's first words to mankind was to "be fruitful and multiply..." (Gen 1:28). Married couples, when able, should seek to follow this command to procreate because God seeks godly offspring (Mal 2:15). Children are to be viewed not as a burden but as a blessing of God (Ps 127:3-5). Those couples unable to bear children still have a complete marriage and are called to be fruitful in other areas of ministry (spiritual growth, role models, adoption, etc.). Furthermore, God uses fathers and mothers to rear children in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Deut 6:4-9; Prov 22:6; Eph 6:4). Fathers have the primary responsibility to train and nurture godly characteristics in their family life (Eph 5:26, 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4-5), as well as mothers are called to train the young women (Titus 2:3-5).

How many children do you desire?

What will your marriage communicate to your children?

How would you define your expected parenting style? (active or reactive)

Who can be a resource for you in raising your children?

Your marriage is one of God's means for you and your spouse to practice biblical stewardship.

God expects his gifts to be used wisely (Matt 25:14-30). One gift is your marriage. God has given you a beautiful relationship, which is each spouse's responsibility to offer security and develop into a God honoring marriage. A second gift is family. God has given principles in the Bible by which you are to be a good steward in your family. A third gift is financial resources. Sources of income are from God and therefore, you should show thankfulness to God by honoring him with a tithe (Prov 3:9; 2 Cor 9:7). Everything you have is the Lord's (Ps 24:1) and you are to give him first place in every decision; and as you do you will see God's faithfulness (Matt 6:33).

What do you have in your life that is not a gift of God?

Are you both agreed on the way you spend money? Do you have a budget?

Your marriage relationship has the primary purpose of glorifying (pleasing) God in everything.

God commands every believer to prioritize their life based on worshiping him (Matt 6:33, 22:37; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9, 14-15; Col 3:17). The marriage relationship is no different. Therefore, both spouses should seek to walk with God individually and jointly. This involves, and may not be limited to: weekly (if not daily) family devotion, faithful church involvement and stewardship practice, commitment to ministry toward fellow believers and being a Christ-like witness toward others.

Why are you getting married? Does your relationship reflect the divine purposes of marriage?

Recommended Resources

Conflict & Communication

Sande, Ken. Peacemaking for Families.

Thomas, Gary. Sacred Marriage: What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?

Tripp, Paul. War of Words.

Husband & Wife Roles

Fitzpatrick, Elyse. Helper by Design.

Scott, Stuart. The Exemplary Husband.

Finances

Burkett, Larry. Debt-Free Living: How to Get Out of Debt & Stay Out.

Budgeting with Dave Ramsey found at http://www.daveramsey.com/media/pdf/fpu_qbudget.pdf

Sex

Akin, Daniel. God on Sex: The Creator's Ideas about Love, Intimacy and Marriage.

Smith, Robert. Biblical Principles of Sex

Wheat, Ed, and Gaye Wheat. Intended for Pleasure.

Parenting

Fitzpatrick, Elyse, Give Them Grace

Tripp, Paul. Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens.

Tripp, Tedd. Shepherding a Child's Heart.

Link: <http://growinggodlygenerations.com/2015/02/23/parenting-in-proverbs-series-links/>

Family Issues

Rainey, Dennis and Barbara. Growing a Spiritually Strong Family.

Rainey, Dennis. Starting Your Marriage Right: What You Need to Know and Do in the Early Years to Make It Last A Lifetime.

Addictions

Powlison, David. Pornography: Slaying the Dragon

Welch, Ed. Addictions, A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel

Other Helps

www.fltoday.org

www.family.org

www.heritagebuilders.com

www.homeword.com

SAMPLE Wedding Ceremony



This is a typical sample wedding ceremony. In general the pastor is flexible for the ceremony and order. However, he may have some suggestions for how to best transition from one to another. Please select this order with your pastor as soon as possible and schedule a rehearsal date, which is mandatory for all wedding participants. All music or readings in the ceremony should be previewed by pastor. Likewise, all personally written vows that will be in the ceremony should be previewed by the pastor. If there is a specific Wedding Coordinator then the Pastor will gladly work together with that person on the ceremony details.

Prelude

Appropriate wedding music played during seating – music selection

Solo

Optional

Seating of Mothers (Any others to be recognized?)

- music selection

Lighting candles (optional)

Processional

Pastor, groom & groomsmen enter

Bridesmaids enter – music selection

Bride enters – music selection

Father may be seated or remain center stage

Invocation

Pastor prays

Ceremony

Message

Pledge of Parents (optional)

Prayer

Exchange Vows & Rings

Lighting of unity candle (optional)

Scripture reading and/or Solo (optional)

Pronouncement

Prayer

Kissing of the Bride

Presentation as Husband & Wife

Recessional

– music selection

Ushers to escort *or* Bride & Groom may choose to dismiss while greeting

Receiving line to greet guests

Pictures to follow ceremony

Pledge of Bridal Father and/or Parents (optional):

Bridal Father

“Who presents this bride for marriage to this groom?”

Respond: “Her Mother and I Do”

The parents of both Bride & Groom stand.

Bride’s Parents,

Do you give permission for the joining together of **Bride & Groom**?

Respond: “We Do”

Groom’s Parents,

Do you give permission for the joining together of **Groom & Bride**?

Respond: “We Do”

Exchange of Vows:

Believing that you both have considered the sacredness of the covenant of marriage, I will now ask you to join your right hands.

Groom, in taking **Bride** to be your wedded wife, you must promise before the Lord and the witnesses present that you will love her, esteem her and encourage her in that relationship and leaving all others you will unite as one with her in marriage. By God’s grace, you will have the responsibility to serve and share in all things at all times and in all ways as a true and faithful husband as long as you both shall live. Do you make that promise to the Lord and to **Bride**?

Respond: “I Will” OR “I Do”

Bride, in taking **Groom** to be your wedded husband, you must promise before the Lord and the witnesses present that you will love him, esteem him and encourage him in that relationship and leaving all others you will unite as one with him in marriage. By God’s grace, you will have the responsibility to serve and share in all things at all times and in all ways as a true and faithful wife as long as you both shall live. Do you make that promise to the Lord and to **Groom**?

Respond: “I Will” OR “I Do”

Groom, repeat this vow after me to her:

“I, **Groom**, take thee **Bride**, to be my wife, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, for richer or poorer, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.”

Bride, repeat this vow after me to him:

“I, **Bride**, take thee **Groom**, to be my husband, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, for richer or poorer, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.”

Exchange of Rings:

In Biblical covenants there would often be a symbol representing the covenant made between the parties.

Groom & Bride have chosen these rings as the seal and as the symbol of their wedding covenant.

Groom, as a ceaseless reminder of this hour and of the vows that you are making to the Lord and to **Bride**, I want you to place this ring on her left hand and repeat after me to her: “With this ring, I thee wed.”

Bride, as a ceaseless reminder of this hour and of the vows that you are making to the Lord and to **Groom**, I want you to place this ring on his left hand and repeat after me to him: “With this ring, I thee wed.”

Comments:

Couple's Name & Contact Info:

Premarital Counseling:

Session 1 –

Session 2 –

Session 3 –

Additional at request –

Wedding Colors:

Wedding Rehearsal Date/Time/Location:

Wedding Date:

Pastor _____

Office: 410-647-0765

Cell: