

Late Engagement: Approximately Two Weeks Prior To The Wedding

Depending upon the couple, the following may be useful at this time:

Modules:

1. Money Matters in Marriage
2. Conflict Resolution Skills in Marriage
3. Sexuality in Christian Marriage – Parts I and II. Depending on the couple, it may be best to give out **Part I** earlier in the engagement and **Part II** in the last weeks of engagement.

I. ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING COUNSEL.

- **Final review of wedding plans as discussed in previous sessions.**

Reminder: If the couple is traveling by plane or out of the country, they need to have the wife's name [maiden/married] consistent on tickets, passport, driver's license, etc.

II. MARRIAGE COUNSEL.

A. The seriousness of marriage vows.

Matthew 5:31-32, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

Luke 16:18, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

Romans 7:2-3, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

B. Spiritual growth.

1. God must be "Number 1."

Matthew 22:37, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

2. Read and pray alone and together.
3. Have prayers at meals.
4. Have family worship.
 - Bible.
 - Bible stories.
 - Close with prayer.
5. Support church and church activities.

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C. Financial planning.

1. All you have belongs to God . . . you are stewards.
2. Husband and wife need to make decisions jointly.
3. Work out differences in spending habits.
4. Be content with your possessions – don't covet or envy.

1 Timothy 6:6-12, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
5. Be content with your wages.

Proverbs 16:8, "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right."
6. You don't need to have everything.

Luke 12:15, "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
7. Use caution on indebtedness.
8. Cautious use of credit cards.
9. Work on a budgeting plan.
10. Plan tithing and giving.
11. Savings – try for a six months' reserve.
12. Life insurance – provide for your wife.

1 Timothy 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
13. Investments should be honorable. Use caution.
14. Make a will.

D. Sexual relationship.

1. Respect each other's feelings, needs, and convictions.

1 Thessalonians 4:4-5, "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:"
2. Men and women have different sexual desires.
3. Be considerate during the menstrual time.
4. The importance of respect.
 - When considering any sexual activity, consider as a couple whether it is godly and respectful, and whether it will promote oneness as a couple.
 - Neither spouse should ever feel coerced, manipulated, forced into, or guilty about any sexual activity.
 - These cautions are mentioned so that you can learn to experience the joy and intimacy God intended for your sexual relationship. It is not intended to create fear, guilt, or inhibit appropriate intimacy in your marriage.
 - Discussion of sensitive topics.

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5. Family Planning.
 - God plans for married couples to bear children.

1 Timothy 5:14, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."
 - Elder has guidelines in Confidential Minutes, Page 285, Taylor, Birth Control, Item 1.
 - Use the following passage to discuss temporary abstinence as a natural family planning method.

1 Corinthians 7:1-7, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that."
 - Use discipline and self-control.

1 Thessalonians 4:4, "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;"
 - There are many ways to express love in addition to sexual intercourse.
 - If you run into problems, counsel with your elder.
6. Sexual activities are very private. They are between the two of you and God. DO NOT DISCUSS WITH OTHERS.

E. Be prayerful, cautious, and seek counsel before sharing issues from your sexual history.

1. At times, one or both of the individuals in a couple may have current or past issues that can potentially affect their sexual relationship in marriage. These issues can include things like having a history of sexual abuse, having had an abortion(s), having had premarital sexual experiences, and/or having struggled with pornography, etc.
2. Sometimes it is difficult to know what to share with your future spouse and what to consider as history that is "passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
3. Engaged couples are encouraged to counsel with their elder about what they share in order to prevent unnecessary hurt in their relationship. This is because while sometimes we need to share certain things, other times we need to let things remain in the past.
4. Seek counsel about sharing issues with your future spouse when the issues:
 - Are currently present or part of an ongoing struggle.
 - Hinder your relationship with God.
 - Hinder your relationship with your spouse.
 - Hinder your ability to live out God's plan for your life.

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F. Problem solving.

1. Choose the appropriate time and setting to discuss a problem.
Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."
2. Control your tone of voice.
Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."
3. Listen very carefully.
Proverbs 18:13, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."
4. Define the problem clearly from both points of view.
5. State what you can agree on.
6. Brainstorm together – don't downgrade your spouse's thoughts.
7. State what changes each of you is willing to make to arrive at a solution.
8. Summarize the best solutions.
9. Pray to God that He will help you take the right steps.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Any questions or comments?

B. Discuss post-wedding follow-up. If the couple will be attending your church, discuss options for follow-up including meeting with the elder, a minister, mentor couple, etc. If the couple will not be attending your home church, tell them to contact the local elder of the church they will be attending.

C. Pray with the couple.

