

Mid-Engagement: At Least One Month Prior To The Wedding

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

Modules:

1. Personality and Spiritual Gifts in Marriage
2. Affection, Love Languages, and Gender Differences in Marriage
3. Priorities and Stewardship of Time and Talents in Marriage
4. Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision Making in Marriage

Supplemental Handouts:

1. Communication Guidelines
2. Forgiveness: What It Is, What It Isn't, and How To Do It
3. The Christian Home
4. The Importance of Family Life
5. Suggestions for a Happy Marriage

I. ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING COUNSEL.

- Review plans for wedding.
 1. Any changes in plans or additional plans?
 2. Hymns to be used in ceremony.
 3. Any Scripture preference?

II. MARRIAGE COUNSEL.

A. The Blessings and Responsibilities of a Godly Home.

1. Discuss the importance of following the Word as a couple.

Ephesians 5:1-2, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."
2. Consider the following roles.
 - Husband – Wife.
 - Parents.
3. Family worship.
 - Husband is spiritual head and must set the standard.
 - Read the Word and pray aloud together daily during family worship (e.g., mealtime prayer or devotions).
 - Pray at your bedside together.
4. Support proper use of head covering.
5. Keep home free of "killers of intimacy."
 - Unwholesome publications.
 - Inappropriate use of the Internet.
 - Television.
 - Worldly music.
 - Excessive use of radio.
 - Crude or profane language.

Mid-Engagement: At Least One Month Prior To The Wedding

- Inappropriate use of alcohol.
- Improper dietary and hygiene habits.

B. Communication.

1. Give priority to spending time together with God.
Mark 6:31, "And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."
2. Be a good listener.
3. Be open and honest, but with great sensitivity to the other's feelings.
Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
4. Be a good listener.
5. Develop habits of courtesy, kindness, and gentleness in speech and actions.
Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
6. Verbal or physical abuse cannot be tolerated in marriage.
7. Again, be a good listener!
8. Don't be judgmental. Focus on the other's strengths rather than weaknesses.
Matthew 7:1-2, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."
9. Don't be a bored listener.
10. Don't ridicule your mate.
11. Don't give orders.
12. Don't over-correct or nag.
13. Don't use the silent treatment when you are angry. This can be abusive.
14. Don't interrupt.
15. Don't accumulate grievances.
16. When you think you have listened enough, listen a little longer.
17. Try to understand the feelings behind what your mate is saying, and be considerate of them.
18. Repeat back what you believe you heard your mate say (i.e., the "mirroring" technique).

C. Proper priorities.

1. Is God is your first priority?
Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
2. Do you have an excessive drive for financial gain?
1 Timothy 6:9, "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."
3. Does the wife need to work outside of the home?
4. Is the husband a workaholic?
5. Housekeeping – is the house kept neat?
6. Do you support church activities?

Mid-Engagement: At Least One Month Prior To The Wedding

D. Relationship with family members.

1. Plan time to visit with parents.
 - In person, phone calls, letters, etc.
 - Equal time for each set of parents.
2. Counsel with parents and mature family members. They have much experience and can be a source of excellent advice.
3. After God, your first responsibility is to each other.

Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
4. Don't be too dependent on parents.
5. Be a good Christian witness to your family.

E. Four R's of Marriage.

1. Responsibility.
 - Husband is responsible for his wife.
 - Wife should reverence her husband.

Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."
 - Both are accountable to God and to each other.
2. Respect.
 - Be polite.
 - Be kind.

Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - Be courteous.
 - Use respectful names and titles for each other.
 - Be considerate.
 - Don't compare.

2 Corinthians 10:12, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."
3. Romance.
 - Spend special time alone together.
 - Take walks or drives together.
 - Notes on pillow, in bathroom, kitchen, etc.
 - Give squeezes, pats, winks, etc.
 - Say, "I love you."
 - Continue sharing love and courtesies on a frequent basis.

Mid-Engagement: At Least One Month Prior To The Wedding

4. Repentance.

- Say, “I’m sorry.”
- Come to grips with differences.
- Seek to resolve issues in a timely, godly manner.

Ephesians 4:26, “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

- Forgive as Christ forgave.

Ephesians 4:32, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

F. Some final thoughts.

1. You cannot be genuinely open to God and closed to your mate.
2. You cannot hurt your mate without hurting yourself.
3. If you want to be treated like a king, treat her like a queen (and vice versa).
4. Good marriages aren’t necessarily perfect. However, couples with good marriages place a high priority on their relationships.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Any questions or comments?

B. Agree on any “homework” the couple is to do in between sessions.

C. Remind the couple to counsel with the elder before any problems become overwhelming.

D. Set date for next counseling session.

E. Pray with the couple.

Copyright 2008-2016 by Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services. Can be freely copied and redistributed. Not to be sold. For the latest version of this document, please visit www.accounseling.org/elders or scan here:

