

INTRODUCTION

A Wedding is a Day, a Marriage Is a Lifetime!

GOAL: Welcome and Introduction to the Engaged Encounter Podcast.

INTRODUCTION:

In the first part of this podcast, you will meet the two couples who will present this nine-podcast series, and they will share the format each episodes will follow.

1. Welcome
2. Introduction of presenting team
3. Nuts and Bolts
4. How the Podcast works
5. Encouragement

Note: Ron and Carol Werker and Dan and Nancy Spearow are the speakers on the podcast. They are not here as marriage counselors or public speakers. They will be sharing some guidelines and living examples and interactions from their personal lives.

BEGINNING OUR JOURNEY

GOAL: To look at each of us as individuals and understand the importance of communication and trust as we share with each other.

INTRODUCTION:

In this podcast, the focus is on each of us as individuals, rather than on us as a couple. This is crucial, because who we are and how we see ourselves profoundly affects the way we relate to each other.

Luke 10:27, "Love ... your neighbor as yourself."

1. THE KEYS TO A MEANINGFUL ENGAGED ENCOUNTER
 - a. Honesty
 - b. Acceptance
 - c. Trust
 - d. Communication

Notes:

1. PERSONALITY SURVEY (on the next page)
2. RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY
3. PERCEIVED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES
4. IMPORTANCE AND RISKS OF OPEN COMMUNICATION

PERSONALITY SURVEY

Indicate where you see yourself and where you see your fiancé on the scale between the two opposites. There are no wrong or right answers, only personality traits.

Example: outgoing - X - - - reserved. (More outgoing than reserved).

How do I see *myself*?

outgoing	-	-	-	-	-	reserved
procrastinator	-	-	-	-	-	prompt
domineering	-	-	-	-	-	submissive
cautious	-	-	-	-	-	trusting
reserved	-	-	-	-	-	affectionate
shy	-	-	-	-	-	confident
calm	-	-	-	-	-	excitable
spender	-	-	-	-	-	economical
planner	-	-	-	-	-	spontaneous
quiet	-	-	-	-	-	outgoing
critical	-	-	-	-	-	tolerant
indifferent	-	-	-	-	-	sympathetic
independent	-	-	-	-	-	dependent
perceptive	-	-	-	-	-	unobservant
social	-	-	-	-	-	private
timid	-	-	-	-	-	bold
organized	-	-	-	-	-	carefree
revengeful	-	-	-	-	-	forgiving
listener	-	-	-	-	-	talker
lazy	-	-	-	-	-	workaholic
never volunteer	-	-	-	-	-	over committed
casual	-	-	-	-	-	formal
comedian	-	-	-	-	-	serious
religious	-	-	-	-	-	atheist
moody	-	-	-	-	-	stable
patient	-	-	-	-	-	hurried

How do I see my *fiancé*?

outgoing	-	-	-	-	-	reserved
procrastinator	-	-	-	-	-	prompt
domineering	-	-	-	-	-	submissive
cautious	-	-	-	-	-	trusting
reserved	-	-	-	-	-	affectionate
shy	-	-	-	-	-	confident
calm	-	-	-	-	-	excitable
spender	-	-	-	-	-	economical
planner	-	-	-	-	-	spontaneous
quiet	-	-	-	-	-	outgoing
critical	-	-	-	-	-	tolerant
indifferent	-	-	-	-	-	sympathetic
independent	-	-	-	-	-	dependent
perceptive	-	-	-	-	-	unobservant
social	-	-	-	-	-	private
timid	-	-	-	-	-	bold
organized	-	-	-	-	-	carefree
revengeful	-	-	-	-	-	forgiving
listener	-	-	-	-	-	talker
lazy	-	-	-	-	-	workaholic
never volunteer	-	-	-	-	-	over committed
casual	-	-	-	-	-	formal
comedian	-	-	-	-	-	serious
religious	-	-	-	-	-	atheist
moody	-	-	-	-	-	stable
patient	-	-	-	-	-	hurried

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) What aspects of your personality will I find the easiest to respect and affirm?
- 2) Because I need and trust you so much, I want your help in specific ways to overcome these weaknesses I see in my personality.
- 3) What specific personal characteristics do I see in myself that make it more difficult for you to love me?
- 4) What things about myself – thoughts, feelings, actions, fantasies, do I find difficult to reveal to you? (Positive things as well as negative).
- 5) What areas have I found it a risk to share with you? Write on as many as you can in detail. Start with the areas where you are the least open, such as:
 - a) Fear of failure
 - b) Responsibilities of marriage
 - c) Roles in marriage
 - d) Sex
 - e) Children
 - f) Religion
 - g) In-Laws
 - h) Drinking and drugs
 - i) Careers-yours & mine
 - j) Security
 - k) The way you treat me
 - l) Friends
 - m) Other areas
- 5) Do I think you listen to me openly? Be specific. Do I listen to *you* openly?

DECISION TO LOVE

GOAL: To show that there is a cycle of stages of love that constantly reoccur, and that love is not dependent on feeling, but that **to love is a decision.** The decision to love involves being life-giving to each other.

INTRODUCTION:

The title of this podcast is “Decision to Love.” In this episode, we turn our thoughts toward us as a couple. As you have grown up, how many times have stories ended with “and they lived happily ever after?” But in real life it does not always happen that way. There are stages of love in any relationship. To get through the tough times it takes a strong commitment to your relationship and a decision to love your spouse.

1. STAGES OF RELATIONSHIP
2. ROMANCE
3. DISILLUSIONMENT
4. TO LOVE IS A DECISION
 - a. Openness in all aspects of our lives — I am aware of my partner.
 - b. When I am sensitive — I can be responsible to her/him.
 - c. When I am tender — there is a closeness in our relationship.
 - d. Patience with self and spouse.
 - e. Willingness to work together.
5. KEEPING ROMANCE ALIVE
6. LIFE-GIVING DECISIONS IN MARRIAGE
7. LIFE-GIVING DECISIONS IN RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER
8. OBSTACLES TO BEING LIFE-GIVING

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) When have I experienced:
 - Romance in our relationship?
 - Disillusionment in our relationship?
- 2) What specific changes would I like to see you make after we are married? Can I accept you without these changes?
- 3) In what areas of our life do I find that loving you takes a decision?
- 4) Am I willing to compromise when we cannot reach a mutual decision? How do I react to compromising?
- 5) In what areas am I competitive with you or jealous of you, and how must I change to show daily your specialness to you?
- 6) How close do I think we are in agreeing on having a child? Have we really made a mutual decision about this?
- 7) Why is it important for me to know your feelings before making a major decision?
- 8) What decisions about each of our careers do we have to make as a result of our marriage?

Alternate question if you were previously married: If you have been married before, you may find this question helpful. Choose whichever question you find to be most relevant to your situation.

- 9) Do I believe I have “recovered” from my former marriage? How do I feel about that?

UNITY

GOAL: Happiness is not the ultimate goal of marriage, but rather unity is. Unity requires the daily decision to love. Unity is part of the “working” at our marriage. It is the constant striving to achieve oneness.

INTRODUCTION:

The title of this podcast is “Unity.” In this episode, we discuss how happiness is dependent on circumstances, subject to moods and outside influences. Marriage gives the opportunity to create a special unity because marriage is not based on circumstances.

1st John 4:7-21, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.” God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because He first loved us. Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars’ for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from Him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. (NRSV)

1. THE REAL GOAL OF MARRIAGE
2. WHAT UNITY IS NOT
3. WHAT UNITY IS
4. RESULTS OF UNITY

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) When have I felt close to you, sharing concerns as well as joys?
- 2) When have I felt the greatest need to be close to you?
- 3) How have I withheld myself from you because of my lack of confidence in our love? Explain.
- 4) What is my concept of unity in marriage? Explain.
- 5) Do I believe that unity and not happiness is the real goal of marriage?
- 6) What might we do differently to increase unity in our relationship?

FAITH

GOAL: Marriages are built on faith and commitment. Our marriage is not only a covenant with our spouse, but also a covenant with God. Our relationship with God and with our church helps us keep the covenant of marriage. When, together, we share our faith and commitment with others it makes our marriage and our relationship to God stronger.

INTRODUCTION

The title of this podcast is “Faith.” In this episode, we focus on faith and our covenant with God.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING FAITH
2. MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT
 - a. A contract is a legal agreement between two people.
 - b. A covenant is the reflection of our unconditional love for each other.
3. THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A CHURCH HOME TO HELP LIVE OUT OUR COMMITMENT
4. THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) Describe for your fiancé how faith and/or church are important in your life.
- 2) What does having a covenant marriage mean to you?
- 3) In what specific ways can we, as a couple be a sign of love to:
 - Our family?
 - Our friends?
 - Our church?
 - Our community?
 - Our neighborhood?

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

GOAL: To make us more aware of the changes in our relationships with our family and friends as a result of our marriage. To make us more aware that we as a couple have an impact on other's lives just as others have had an impact on ours.

INTRODUCTION:

Who we are today is largely the result of those we have known. The title of this podcast is "Family and Friends." In this episode, we see how our families and friends have a strong impact on our beliefs and values. Having said that, we will find that our relationships with our family and friends may change quite a bit after our marriage. We may find that we don't have as much in common with our single friends as we once had. As our wedding day approaches, we need to look closely at our relationships as a couple. Our focus needs to shift from MY family and friends to OUR family and friends.

1. FAMILIES OF ORIGIN

2. CHILDREN

3. FRIENDS

4. LETTER TO A SIGNIFICANT PERSON

Write a letter to someone whom you have never adequately thanked for his or her influence on your life.

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) What special qualities do we as a couple have to share with others?
- 2) What are some of my family's holiday traditions? Do I expect us to continue any of these traditions?
- 3) How have my relationships with my single friends changed since we started dating? How do I expect my relationships with my single friends to change after we're married?
- 4) How much time should we spend with my parents? With yours?

Alternate questions if you were previously married: If you have been married before, you may find one of these questions helpful. Choose whichever question you find to be most relevant to your situation.

- 1) How do our children feel about our marrying?
- 2) How can we blend our family?
- 3) How do I feel about disciplining your children?
- 4) How will we handle the holidays?

PLANNING AND FINANCES

GOAL: To challenge us to examine our individual values and goals, and to begin the ongoing process of formulating couples' values and goals — setting the priorities necessary to achieve them; to point out the need to continually evaluate and assess the goals we establish as a couple — to see alternatives, open doors and dare to choose lifestyles that will allow openness to each other and to God.

INTRODUCTION:

The title of this podcast is “Planning and Finances.” In this episode, it deals with how you can work together to prioritize and decide what is important to both of you.

1. THE PLANNING PROCESS

2. INTRODUCTION TO FINANCE

3. ATTITUDES ABOUT FINANCE

Disagreement over money is one of the most frequently cited reasons couples give for divorcing. The life-giving attitudes available to us in other areas are especially important with finances. We all have a budget, whether we realize it or not. The question is whether we control our money, or our money controls us.

4. CHRISTIAN VALUES

5. FINANCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

6. SUMMARY

FINANCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

You will each need a copy of this survey. Read each statement and mark an “a” if you agree with the statement or a “d” if you disagree. It should take about 10 minutes. Then take a few minutes to compare your answers. When you are ready continue with the podcast.

- _____ 1. I plan to buy a new car at least once every three years.
- _____ 2. It's OK to borrow money from our relative.
- _____ 3. I'd rather spend \$100 on paint and supplies for our living room than on a new outfit.
- _____ 4. It is important to go away for a vacation every year.
- _____ 5. I believe in joint checking and saving accounts.
- _____ 6. We should not spend more on Christmas gifts than what we make in a week.
- _____ 7. I want my children to attend private school.
- _____ 8. Life insurance in the amount of five times our annual income is an absolute must.
- _____ 9. All purchases over \$100 should be discussed before the purchase.
- _____ 10. I'd rather spend \$20 for a new book than for a meal out.
- _____ 11. The spouse who makes more money should have a greater say in spending it.
- _____ 12. Even if it means cutting back on our lifestyle, it is important for one of us to be at home while our children are growing up.
- _____ 13. If we must economize, I'd rather cut back on entertainment than on clothes.
- _____ 14. Giving to the church and/or other charities should be one of our first financial priorities.
- _____ 15. Both spouses should be covered by life insurance.
- _____ 16. I'd be willing to cut back drastically on our lifestyle for four to six years so my spouse can return to school or establish his or her own business.
- _____ 17. Each spouse should be able to spend some money without having to account for it.
- _____ 18. Packing a lunch and bringing it from home is better than the expense of buying lunch out.
- _____ 19. It's important for us to buy a house before we have children.
- _____ 20. It's important to have a detailed budget and stick to it.

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes. (There is room to write on page 6.10.)
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

In order to plan our lives and to set up goals and priorities, it is necessary to begin with the general style or pattern we wish our lives to take. **Therefore ...**

- 1) Describe in detail how you envision living after your wedding day. (Examples; Do your plans include changing jobs, additional schooling, moving, buying a house, having children?) What is your anticipated timetable for these events?
- 2) Who will be responsible for finances in our house? Paying bills? Balancing the checkbook(s)?
- 3) How essential is it that we strictly budget our money? Will I make sacrifices to stay on budget?
- 4) What financial obligations do I have that we need to discuss? Child support? School loans? Credit cards? Bad debt history? Others?

Alternative question if you were previously married: If you have been married before, you may find this question helpful. Choose whichever question you find to be most relevant to your situation.

- 5) Have financial problems in my previous marriage made it difficult for me to relinquish control of financial matters? How do I see us dealing with this?

TWO CANNOT LIVE CHEAPLY AS ONE

Couples who talk honestly about money are less likely to get divorced. That's important to realize in a society where half of the marriages end in divorce. Talking about money means you share your dreams, lifestyle desires, plans for children, where you want to go on vacation ... just about everything you decide to do as a couple involves money.

You can make detailed money plans, or you can just wing it. Experience discloses that the more formally you plan, the less likely you are to have unpleasant financial surprises. Everyone gets stuck with an unexpected bill, but you can smooth out most of the bumps if you will plan ahead.

Following is a list containing most of the expenses that a couple will encounter. Some of the items will not apply to you. Don't overlook one important expenditure in your plan- SAVINGS. There *will* be a rainy day sometime during your lifetimes. How you come through those tough times will depend on how well you saved. Savings should be a minimum of five percent of your family budget. If you'll save more than five percent, you probably can provide for a comfortable retirement. Saving becomes a habit, so start off right!

One final word about budgets. Everyone has a budget, whether it's formal or not. Some people reach their spending levels when their credit cards reach their limits. Others curtail spending when they are unable to pay the balance off every month or can no longer save. You need to decide where you want to be. We think a formal budget is the way to go. Rather than limiting your freedom, a good budgeting program can lead to Your financial liberation. Before you begin filling out the worksheet that follows, you may want to make a few copies of the form, so you can use it again in the future when your financial situation changes.

The first step in the budgeting process is to list your sources of income. Enter the amounts as GROSS income below. Gross Income is total income before you take out any taxes. For example, a couple earning \$15.00 per hour would have a monthly gross income of \$2,580 ($\$15 \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 4.3 \text{ weeks}$) or an annual income of \$31,200 ($\$15 \times 40 \text{ hours} \times 52 \text{ weeks}$).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: BUDGETING QUESTIONNAIRE

If you didn't already read "TWO CANNOT LIVE CHEAPLY AS ONE," you will want to read it now or when you're done with the podcast. Following is a questionnaire to help you consider most of the expenses that you will encounter as a couple. You may want to fill this out together. As mentioned in the podcast, Dave Ramsey also offers financial planning insights.

Income from:	Monthly	Annually
Employment	_____	_____
Investments	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>	_____	_____

Following is a listing of family expenses. On the large ticket items, we suggest percentages of GROSS income to spend in parentheses. The amounts you spend will depend on your income level and personal goals.

HOUSING COSTS: Usually the largest portion of a family budget (20%-40% of total income).

	Monthly	Annual
Rent or House Payment	_____	_____
Utilities	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____
Cable TV	_____	_____
Repairs and Maintenance	_____	_____
Insurance	_____	_____
Homeowner Dues	_____	_____
Property Tax	_____	_____
Gardener	_____	_____
Housekeeper	_____	_____
Cleaning Supplies	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Housing Cost</u>	_____	_____

TAXES: Since we started with GROSS income, we need to take out the various taxes you pay. Most people will find these amounts on their paycheck stub. If you received a refund last year, you may subtract this amount from your annual taxes. If you had to pay, add this amount (15 % to 40% of total income).

	Monthly	Annual
Federal Income Tax	_____	_____
State Income Tax	_____	_____
Social Security Tax	_____	_____
Medicare Tax	_____	_____
State Disability Ins.	_____	_____
Self-Employment Tax	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Taxes</u>	_____	_____

SAVINGS: (5% to 15% of Total Income).

Savings Accounts	_____	_____
Stocks and Bonds	_____	_____
Retirement Plan	_____	_____
Real Estate Investments	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Savings</u>	_____	_____

MEDICAL COSTS: (5% to 15% of Total Income)

Medical/Dental Insurance	_____	_____
Doctors and Hospitals	_____	_____
Eye Care	_____	_____
Dental Care	_____	_____
Medicines	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Medical Costs</u>	_____	_____

	Monthly	Annual
INSURANCE:		
Life Insurance	_____	_____
Disability Insurance	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Insurance Cost</u>	_____	_____
FOOD:		
At Home	_____	_____
Lunches at Work	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Food Cost</u>	_____	_____
TRANSPORTATION:		
Public Transportation	_____	_____
Carpools	_____	_____
Auto Payment or Lease	_____	_____
Gasoline and Oil	_____	_____
Repairs and Maintenance	_____	_____
Washes and Wax	_____	_____
Insurance	_____	_____
Licenses	_____	_____
Parking	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Transportation</u>	_____	_____
PERSONAL CARE:		
Clothing	_____	_____
Hair Care	_____	_____
Beauty Care	_____	_____
Dry Cleaning	_____	_____
Personal Hygiene	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Personal Care</u>	_____	_____

ENTERTAINMENT:

Monthly

Annual

Meals	_____	_____
Club Memberships	_____	_____
Movies and Theater	_____	_____
Boats, RVs	_____	_____
Hobbies	_____	_____
Vacation Fund	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Entertainment</u>	_____	_____

CHARITY:

Church	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
<u>Total Charity</u>	_____	_____

MISCELLANEOUS:

Newspapers & Magazines	_____	_____
Education	_____	_____
Personal/Holiday Gifts	_____	_____
Support of Family/Others	_____	_____
Home Improvements	_____	_____
Purchases of Major Items:		
Car	_____	_____
Furniture	_____	_____
Home Accessories	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
Interest on Debts	_____	_____
Debt Reductions	_____	_____
Child Care/Babysitting	_____	_____
College Fund	_____	_____
Spending Money	_____	_____
<u>Total Miscellaneous</u>	_____	_____

Detailed Budget by Category

Once you have filled in the items above, you can determine the amount of spending your budget requires in each category on the form below.

Divide your expenses by total income to find the percentage of your total income spent in each category.

	Amount	Percentage
<u>Total Income</u>	_____	<u>100%</u>
EXPENSES:		
Total Housing	_____	_____
Total Taxes	_____	_____
Total Savings	_____	_____
Total Medical	_____	_____
Total Insurance	_____	_____
Total Food	_____	_____
Total Transportation	_____	_____
Total Personal Care	_____	_____
Total Charity	_____	_____
Total Miscellaneous	_____	_____

COPING WITH CHANGE

GOAL: To help us recognize the need to protect the stability of our marriage by communicating our feelings regarding loss, whether that is loss of physical capacities, change in life situations, divorce or death.

INTRODUCTION:

The title of this podcast is “Coping with Change.” In this episode, we discuss:

- A. Loss is a fact of life.
- B. Communication between husband and wife is imperative.
- C. Hope in the face of the inevitable.

1. LOSS OF PHYSICAL CAPACITIES
2. LOSS IN LIFE SITUATIONS
3. HOPE IS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT PART OF COPING WITH CHANGE
4. THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE IN FACING LIFE’S CHANGING SITUATIONS

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) How do I feel about the certainty of experiencing death or loss in our marriage?
- 2) When have I come in contact with death? Have I shared my fears, hopes and other feelings about death with you?
- 3) How do I react to illness or injury in others? How do I feel about caring for you when you are ill? How do I change when I am ill or injured?
- 4) How do I feel about the possibility of experiencing loss in my own body?
- 5) How do I feel about the possibility of experiencing loss in your body?
- 6) Am I prepared to move on the average of once every five years?
- 7) Am I willing to make a career move for your sake?
- 8) Am I willing to make a health move for your sake?
- 9) How do I feel when I hear 50 percent of marriages end in divorce? How will we handle our relationship when crises come? Do I believe divorce is an option we might choose? Why or why not?

Alternate question if you were previously married: If you have been married before, you may find this question helpful. Choose whichever question you find to be most relevant to your situation.

- 10) Have I really dealt with (finished grieving over) a loss or death in a previous relationship?

INTIMACY

GOAL: To stress the importance of intimacy in our relationship and to reinforce the concept that intimacy is more than sexual intercourse. Every intimate encounter brings satisfaction, not every sex act does.

INTRODUCTION: The title of this podcast is “Intimacy.” In this episode, we will look at God’s plan for marriage. God desires that we live a two-in-one flesh covenant. It is through our intimacy that we become the embodiment of God’s plan. Our sexual relationship is only a part of our total marriage relationship. Intimacy is more than sex, and sex more than intercourse. Intimacy can be experienced in every aspect of our relationship.

Genesis 2:24: Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. (NRSV)

1. ATTITUDES
 - a) Intimacy Inventory
2. EXPECTATIONS
3. SEXUAL ABSTINENCE BEFORE MARRIAGE
4. HONEYMOON
5. THE JOYFULNESS OF SEX
6. INTIMATE COMMUNICATION
7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

INTIMACY INVENTORY

A = Agree; D = Disagree

Indicate with **A** or **D** for yourself and how you think your fiancé will answer.

<u>SELF</u>	<u>FIANCÉ</u>	<u>STATEMENT</u>
___	___	1. Intimacy is sharing your entire being with your loved one.
___	___	2. Intimacy begins long before the bedroom.
___	___	3. Romance is more important than sex.
___	___	4. Men desire intercourse more frequently than women.
___	___	5. Passion fades with the passage of time.
___	___	6. Intercourse should always take place in the bedroom.
___	___	7. Gentleness and tenderness enhance intimacy in a relationship.
___	___	8. Married couples should have intercourse at least twice a week.
___	___	9. Sexual fantasies should be shared with your spouse.
___	___	10. It is just as important to be friends as it is to be lovers.
___	___	11. Birth control is the woman's responsibility.
___	___	12. Sex is difficult to discuss.
___	___	13. Making love is the same as having intercourse.
___	___	14. Foreplay is a must in order to achieve sexual fulfillment.
___	___	15. Maintaining sexual abstinence before our marriage is important to me.
___	___	16. Humans are sexual beings by nature.
___	___	17. Romance does not imply a sensational setting or erotic physical activity.
___	___	18. Conception of a child should take place in the first year of marriage.
___	___	19. Women should never initiate a sexual encounter.
___	___	20. Loving unconditionally sets the stage for intimacy.

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Choose the most appropriate/difficult question below to begin writing. (Select just one question.)
2. Write for the full suggested time of 10 minutes. (There is an area to write on page 8.5.)
3. Discuss for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

QUESTION OPTIONS:

- 1) What are my feelings about intimacy in our relationship?
- 2) How do I feel about secondary virginity?
- 3) After hearing this presentation, what questions about intimacy do I most want to talk with you about?
- 4) As I recall some intimate moments in our relationship, I feel _____?
- 5) What attitudes and expectations of intimacy do I bring to our marriage?
- 6) What do I think about our potential (or lack thereof) to create new life?
- 7) What qualities of mine (or yours) do not fit society's expectations for males and females?

Alternate questions if you were previously married: If you have been married before, you may find these questions helpful. Choose whichever question you find to be most relevant to your situation.

- 8) What was my attitude and self-concept in regard to sex in my former marriage?
- 9) How will my sexual experiences in my former marriage affect our relationship in marriage?
- 10) How can we keep from comparing our sexual relationship with past ones?
- 11) How will we preserve our need for intimacy since we have children in our household?

REJOICE IN YOUR SEXUALITY

The following is part of a prayer from *“Holding on to Romance: Keeping Your Marriage Alive and Passionate After the Honeymoon Years are Over,”* by H. Norman Wright (Regal Books, 1984) (permission pending)

Directions: Use the words at the bottom to fill in the blanks. (Hint: The first letter of the word is included in the blank to assist you.)

Lord, it’s hard to know what sex really is — Is it some demon put here to torment me?

Or some delicious seducer from reality? It is neither of these, Lord. I know what sex is — It

is b_____ and s_____, It is p_____ and t_____, It is

strong e_____ and gentle h_____, It is open

n_____ and hidden m_____, It is joyful tears in honeymoon

faces, and it is tears on wrinkled faces at a golden wedding anniversary. Sex is a q_____

l_____ across the room, a l_____ on a pillow, A rose laid on a breakfast plate,

laughter in the night. Sex is life — not all of life — but wrapped up in the m_____ of

life. Sex is your good gift, O God to enrich life, to continue the race, to communicate, to

show me who I am, to reveal my mate, to cleanse through “one flesh.”

handholding

quiet look

body

lovenote

embrace

mystery

meaning

nakedness

passion

spirit

tenderness

OUR ENGAGEMENT PROMISE

GOAL: To help us become aware of the preparation needed for entering the covenant of marriage. To emphasize the importance of commitment in marriage. To offer us the opportunity to write a covenant promise to each other.

INTRODUCTION:

The title of this podcast is “Our Engagement Promise.” In this episode, we look at how engagement is part of preparation for marriage and how it offers us the opportunity to continue deepening our relationship as we move toward our marriage. Remember, a wedding is a day; a marriage is a lifetime.

1. A CALL TO LOVE
2. THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMITMENT
3. AN ENGAGEMENT PROMISE — A PLEDGE OF OUR COMMITMENT
4. PURPOSE OF AN ENGAGEMENT PROMISE
5. SUGGESTED HELP FOR GETTING STARTED ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT PROMISE (See page 9.2)

MAKE THIS A SPECIAL TIME IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

1. Review the directions and suggestions below to begin writing.
2. Write for the full suggested writing time of 15 minutes.
3. Share for the full suggested time of 15 minutes.

OUR ENGAGEMENT PROMISE

Following are some ways you might begin your engagement promise. Use one or more of these statements or begin in your own way. In any case, be specific in what you see as needed in your relationship between now and your wedding day.

1. "I pledge to live out my love for you by ... " (Give several practical ways you will do this).
2. "I want to live the rest of my life with you because ... " (Share the qualities you see in each other that make you want to spend the rest of your life together).
3. "Because I love you, I plan to work on deepening our relationship between now and our wedding day by _____."
4. "Although I love you, I cannot commit myself to you for life at this time, until/because..." (do not be afraid to express your true feelings if this is the case. Trust that your fiancé will value your honesty. An inability to commit yourself at this time does not necessarily mean that you will be unable to commit in the future).

