

Premarital Counseling Session I: Questions & Inventory

Premarital Questions

The following questions will require time, thought, and careful reflection.¹ Each person should spend time thoughtfully and prayerfully answering these questions on their own. Most of these questions do not have a 'right' answer; the important thing is for you to be honest. As you do that, these questions will begin to prepare yourself to build a home that mutually strengthens one another, produces children who love Christ, and honors God in every way.

After you have answered these questions individually, send a copy to the pastor conducting the premarital counseling (at least 2 days before your first session) and be sure to talk through your answers with each other before coming for your first session. The pastor conducting your pre-marital counseling is the only other person who will read your responses.

Wedding Details

1. Have you already planned the date, time, and location of your wedding? If so, please provide those details.
 - Date:

 - Time:

 - Location:

2. Have you decided on the officiating pastor for your wedding ceremony? (NOTE: *Remember to check with the appropriate state government regarding marriage officiant requirements*)
 - Officiant's Name:

 - Officiant's Church:

 - Officiant's Contact Information (phone & email):

Spiritual Background

1. Briefly describe the spiritual environment in which you were raised (e.g. father's faith, mother's faith, if you grew up going to church, faith of siblings, etc.)?

¹ These first questions are adapted from David Powlison and John Yenchko, "Should We Get Married? Five 'Pre-Engagement' Questions to Ask Yourself," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 14:3 (Spring 1996): 33–42 and from Capitol Hill Baptist's Church "Premarital Inventory."

2. How would you describe your relationship with God? Circle one of the following and briefly explain your answer:

Growing in Christ New Believer Searching Curious Indifferent Hostile

3. Are you currently a member of a church? If so, where? If not, do you regularly attend church services? If so, where?

Family/Life Background

4. Were your parents ever Married, Divorced, Separated, Widowed?
5. List the strengths of your parents' marriage that you most want to experience in your own, and the weaknesses in your parent's marriage that you wish to avoid.
6. Name a few significant life events (good and bad) that have significantly shaped you? How might these impact your future relationship with each other?
7. Have you been married before? If so, for how long and what caused the end of the marriage? Or, have you been in any other relationship that you thought would lead to marriage? If so, what happened?

Your Present Relationship

8. How long have you known each other? How long have you been dating? How long have you been engaged?
9. Have you ever called off your relationship and/or plans to marry? If so, what would you say was the cause and how did you resolve the situation?
10. How physical is your relationship at the present time?
- a. How often do you see each other?
 - i. Every Day
 - ii. Several Times Per Week
 - iii. Once Per week
 - iv. Once Per Month
 - v. Other

- b. We spend the night with each other:
 - i. We live together
 - ii. Several times per week
 - iii. Once Per week
 - iv. Once Per Month
 - v. Never

- c. We sexually touch (“pet”) each other:
 - i. Often when we are together
 - ii. Rarely
 - iii. Never

- d. We have sexual intercourse:
 - i. Weekly
 - ii. Once Per Month
 - iii. Rarely
 - iv. In the past, but not anymore
 - v. Never

11. As a couple how have you handled problems in the past? What lessons have you learned about each other during these times?

12. How do you tend to express the following feelings?

Feeling Internalize Internalize, then verbalize Verbalize quickly

Anger

Disappointment

Frustration

Guilt

Joy

Based on these answers, do you think you tend to be external processor (you tend to verbalize things before you think through them) or internal processor (you tend to think through things before you verbalize)? How do you see that affecting your marriage?

13. What 2-3 “needs” do you feel need to be sustained and deepened to cultivate a sense of well being and satisfaction in your relationship. Try to prioritize and articulate each need using examples to illustrate.
14. Why do you want to marry this person? List some of your fiancé(e)’s characteristics which are most attractive to you.
15. At least three characteristics mark a healthy relationship:
- **Mutuality:** mutual caring, mutual honesty, mutual respect, mutual repentance
 - **Reciprocity:** both partners give and receive; there is a safe and open exchange of thoughts and ideas.
 - **Freedom:** there is freedom to respectfully challenge and disagree with one another without the fear of danger or retaliation; disagreement does not always bring disunity.
- Do these characteristics, at least to some degree, mark your relationship?

Your Future Relationship

16. What are you looking for in your marriage (e.g. to make you happy or complete, to give you identity or purpose)?
17. Are the two of you headed in the same direction in life? Are you ready to leave the single life and independent decision making (having your career, finances, and friends influenced by your spouse)? What is your shared vision of lifestyle, number of children, church involvement, and how you will handle time with and influence of extended family?
18. Describe the marriage you have observed which you most want yours to resemble. As you see it, how does a Christian marriage differ from any other?
19. *“Worshipping God as creator in your marriage means that when you look at your husband or wife, when you consider your spouse’s personality and gifts, and when you think about how differently he or she is hardwired from you, you will celebrate the glory of God as creator, expressed in who he designed your spouse to be.”²*

² Paul Trip, *What Did You Expect*, 279.

Are you ready to be a life-long learner of your spouse celebrating non-moral differences to the glory of God?

Working Through Past

We all come into marriage with a past. Some events of our past affect us more than others. Some events affect us positively and others negatively. Likewise, some of our current behaviors affect our marriage more than others, and in various ways. That said, by God's grace, we want to do all we can to ensure your marriage is build on the strongest foundation possible. In order to do that, we need you to honestly consider some sensitive questions.

These do not require written answers and will not even be directly address in this session, but if you answer "Yes" to some of these questions, please talk to the pastor (or his wife or another trusted counselor) privately should you feel that necessary.

In your current relationship:

1. Have you ever been threatened or physically hurt?
2. Have you ever felt fearful of or in physical danger because of your partner's anger?
3. Have you ever been an unwilling participant in any sexual acts in this relationship?

In your past:

1. Have you ever struggled with pornography? Do you currently struggle with pornography? If you currently struggling (or have struggled in the recent past), do you have weekly accountability with another Christian brother/sister?
2. Were you ever physically or sexually abused? If so, have you sought counsel to help you work through the past trauma? Are you fearful about how this might affect your sexual relationship with your fiancé(e)?

Read the article "*I Messed Up: Confessing Sin to Your Boyfriend or Girlfriend Before You Get Engaged*"

- Consider the implications of this article on your engagement
- Talk to the pastor, pastor's wife or trusted friend if you're not sure how best to move forward