



## Wedding Policy

Pastors at Redeemer will perform weddings for members at no cost within the greater Lynchburg area. Couples may provide honorariums if they so desire.

Couples must complete pre-marriage counseling with one of Redeemer's pastors, or someone approved by the session.

Pastors cannot miss Sunday mornings due to weddings except in rare instances and only with prior consent of the session.

Couples should plan their wedding budgets with the following in mind:

- Weddings occurring outside the area (Lynchburg, Bedford/Campbell County) need to reimburse the pastor at the going rate for mileage to and from the rehearsal and wedding.
- If the distance is greater than 60 miles the couple needs to provide housing for the pastor.

Weddings should be timed so as not to compromise the Lord's Day worship. Pastors will not do weddings that start later than 5pm outside of the Lynchburg area on Saturdays or on Sundays without consent of the Session.

# Traditional Wedding Ceremony

Prelude

Seating of Mother of Groom

Seating of Mother of Bride

Processional

Genesis 2

Welcome

(We are gathered together...)

Questions of Intent

Giving of the Bride

(Special music, scripture reading)

Charge to Couple

Wedding Vows

Exchange of Rings

Prayer

Pronouncement

Introduction/Kiss

Benediction

Recessional

## Questions for Couples Heading Toward Marriage

### 1. Are you both Christians?

Please share a brief testimony of God's grace in your life and how he is working in you now?

Is it accurate to describe the Christian life as one of continuous faith and repentance?

What do you pledge to your spouse to do in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?

### 2. Why do you want to marry this person?

There are many ways to answer this question, from the crass (fortune and fame) to the more thoughtful (they make me a better person). Here are two cautions:

a. We tend to fall in love because of what it does for us. Think of the old songs: I love how you love me! That is essentially a self-serving view of marriage. I am in this for what you can do for me, for how you can make me happy. We are all plagued with this tendency.

The world's way of love is, I like what I get from you and I'll stay as long as I get it. But when it stops I am leaving.

The biblical model of love is the promise of future love. I will be there, through thick and thin, *til death do us part*. These walls of commitment secure a place for creative conflict.

b. When you say I want to marry you, apart from natural reasons of attraction and friendship (always best to marry your best friend, and never harmful if you also happen to think they are pretty/handsome), you are saying, "You are the person I want God to use in my life to make me more like his Son. I am a broken sinner and I invite you into my junk to help me be healed from the ravages of the Fall. You will know me like no one else, and will help me see myself in a way I have never seen myself. But I trust you to do that gently and humbly. Likewise, I am called into your heart to help you with the same because marriage is a major instrument God uses to sanctify us, to smooth out the rough edges. God uses an intimate ally in this work- trust is critical- because you are going to tell me I am wrong and I naturally don't want to hear that.

### 3. What kind of sinner do you want to marry?

Unfortunately, there are only sinners to marry in this life. And you are one of them! But do you know that? Do you expect to marry a perfect person? Do you expect to be perfect yourself?

There are really only two kinds of people in the world: those who are BIG sinners and know it, and those who are BIG sinners and don't know it. Guess which is more pleasant to be around?

Among us sinners, there are essential three ways to approach life:

a. Be your own person.

This person is self-absorbed and self-reliant. Everything must be about them. Their source exists to fulfill their dreams. They want to be served.

b. Be a good person.

This person sees themselves as basically good. Bad people are broken. They relate to others based on the law. They tend to be demanding and judgmental.

c. Be humbled by grace.

This person knows they are broken. They are desperate for grace. Because they know that left to themselves they will inflict injury on others, they seek grace, are humbled and grateful to receive it, and are serious about pursuing a life controlled by the Holy Spirit, bearing his fruit.

One measure of how you live is asking yourself: What are you repenting of on a regular basis? What do you want your spouse repenting of?

4. Are you headed in the same direction in life?

Do you share the same core values, ideas, expectations about politics, theology, life-mission? Do you want to be in the same place in 10 or 20 years geographically, spiritually, family-wise?

5. What do others who know you well think of your relationship?

Do you have close friends who would, in love, raise a red flag if they thought they needed to? What do your siblings and parents think? What does God think of this relationship?

6. How would you describe the impact of your upbringing (parents, circumstances, abuse) on the way you view marriage?

7. What would you be most tempted to change in the other person?

Do you believe your differences are an asset? What are you doing daily to keep your heart open for the humility necessary to accept changes to the way you think life should be?

Are you most naturally a:

Controller: want things to always go your way

Pleaser: want to be liked, approved of, peace at all costs.

Masterer: want to be right, competent, seen as knowledgeable, correct others, give opinion

## 8. What is your greatest fear entering into marriage?

Most of think along these lines:

I won't be loved like I really want;

We'll outgrow our compatibility, and wake up terribly lonely one day.

It is most helpful to understand that, despite your sense of being very alike at the beginning of the romance, because of sin no two sinners are perfectly compatible. Once sin entered into Adam and Eve's relationship, they started hiding from God (the death-knell of all relational health), blaming each other in suspicion, discord and shame (if you really knew me you'd reject me). Therefore, your greatest fear should be: my sin will ruin this bond of companionship if left unchecked.

Your greatest concern should be *your* sin. We naturally think of the *other's* sin as the gravest potential problem, that's why most folks get on the defensive sooner or later. Jesus said we all have an uncanny tendency to spot splinters in other's eyes before we see planks in our own. If that is true you must learn to be plank-conscious before you are splinter conscious! Are you humble enough to admit when conflict comes (and it surely will, since when two sinners live under one roof it is inevitable) your pride is the biggest problem to be conquered?

The greatest threat is your sin, own it. My pride, selfishness, neediness, pettiness, demandingness- however it is manifested- will steal what I owe the other, unconditional love and service in Jesus' name. Daily repentance of being a vacuum of self-concern, take-take versus give-give, is the path to freedom.

## 9. What is the greatest gift you have to give the other?

Your strongest contribution to the health of your marriage is your weakness. Knowing you can't do what it takes to love well, you go in brokenness to Jesus to receive what he can abundantly supply. You become a grace-getter, humbly dependent on his unfailing grace. When you are a passionate pursuer of the heart of Jesus, receiving mercy and grace, you will not only become ravishingly beautiful like Him, but you will also have grace to give. Paul says, forgive one another and bear with each other, as Christ has forgiven you. Jesus said, those forgiven much love much. You can't give away what you don't have. Get grace, give grace! Grace is the fresh air that makes marriage breathe. Grace in you makes you safe; how could you abuse someone else when you are intoxicated with Jesus' love?

## 10. Do you understand the biblical vision for intimacy?

A healthy, growing relationship is marked by intimacy- the opening of hearts to each other, sharing dreams, concerns, fears, flaws, thoughts, feelings. But who can risk that? What if they reject me for discovering I am something they don't find attractive? Only the courageous can be so vulnerable, and only the gospel can produce that. The gospel is, your heart is more wicked than you ever imagined, but you are more loved than you ever dreamed possible. The love of Jesus for you, despite your sin, anchors the soul and liberates it to care boldly for another. You can only draw near to each other as you draw near to Christ.

What does Jesus give us as we draw near to him? He creates a repentant heart, fear of the Lord, a healthy suspicion of our own motives. He gives us a picture of what he wants for our spouse, over against what we may want. His grace bends our heart into Christlikeness.

## 11. What makes a relationship safe?

When you first pursue Christ passionately in prayer and bible study daily, fellowship and worship.

When you are hungering for God's glory more than anything else, you will live by his standards for his pleasure, which includes the welfare of others. You will grow in humility: not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. Grace will empower you to love as you've been loved.

## 12. Are you (husband) willing to lead and you (wife) willing to follow his lead?

What will you be producing if you lead well?

What does fellowship look like? What must be present for this to happen?

What is the key to godly leadership? Humility -> servanthood -> dying

How will you handle failure by each in this area?

## 13. Do you accept God's terms for this marriage as a covenant?

A covenant is a binding, legal contract between two parties. Therefore, marriage is primarily an institution of law, which goes against our culture's notion of marriage as an arrangement of present affection. Marriage promises future love- tender, caring, sympathetic faithfulness.

The marriage vow, based on law not emotional states, is unconditional, holding in any situation (for better or for worse) and at all times (til death do us part). That means we can not run our marriages the way we want to. The covenant is public (before God and these witnesses) unconditional (accountable to God and the state) and accepting of God's regulations for marriage.

When folks live together because they don't want the messiness of a divorce, they are really saying, I am not so committed to this relationship that I will vow to it.

The covenant bond secures the secure environment for oneness, or one flesh (Gen.2:24). That is to be one person, joined and unified in purpose, goals, faith, hopes and hurts.

Three components of this are:

Leaving: move out from parents to become a new decision-making unit.

Cleaving: means to be glued, referring to commitment and communication, knowing the other by putting them first.

Weaving: becoming one in companionship

14. Do you have a track record of solving problems together in a biblical fashion?

Over what have you had conflict?

What is your default mode when you don't get your own way?

What are things you personally struggle with?

Do you have any unresolved issues right now?

What style of conflict resolution did you grow up witnessing?

How do you think Satan wants to destroy this bond?

Four phases of Marriage (John Bettler)

1. ROMANCE The nice phase where you don't want to do anything to upset each other.

2. CONFLICT Conflict comes when you wake up one day and realize you didn't marry yourself.

3. RESOLUTION Where you learn to work together, you are pulled together learning to solve some of these problems

4. INTIMACY That deep and abiding trust that says, "We are going to make it."

Key principles to embrace for healthy conflict resolution:

a) Conflict is inevitable. We live in a fallen world. No one does it right all the time.

b) Conflict is ordained to make the relationship better. It shows us how much we need God. It shows us our need to view the world from the other's point of view. It makes the relationship stronger once resolved.

Peace--→ conflict --→

Not resolved = bitterness

Poorly resolved = deteriorates

Well-resolved = deepened bond (like broken bone)

c) You need to understand each other's style and move toward being resolvers:

view of	high	_____		
rela-	1	pleaser	1	resolver
tion-	1	_____		
	1	_____		
ship	1	_____		
	1	ignore	1	controller
	1	_____		
	low			high
	willingness to take risk			

d) Start and end discussions with prayer. God must win, not me!

e) Seek to discern the difference between:

what you interact over (principle, preference)

how you interact (listen for understanding)

why you do what you do (motives)

# Deconstructing Conflict

Conflict

Occurs

(You are trying to get something  
you think is wonderful  
but is out of your control:  
encamped desires.)

(Big three is marriage: money, sex, kids)

Two choices:

Path of Manipulation

(serve me)

Path of Ministry

(serve the other)

Options:

1 Thess.5:14f

	<u>Desires:</u>	<u>Avoids:</u>	<u>Adam</u>	<u>Gospel:</u>	
Win	power, right	weak, fail	blamed	my king	confront
Yield	acceptance	rejection	covered up	loves as brother	encourage
Ignore	peace	stress	hid	prince of pea	help (wait)

Ephesians 5: 22F

Context:

Chapter 1-3 Gospel centered life: saved by grace through faith

v.5: 18 filled with the Spirit

v.5: 21 mutual submission

Husbands Love: 1. Sacrificial (25) 2. Constructive (26-27) 3. Constant (28f)

Wives submit: 1. Personal 2. Spiritual 3. active

## 15. Do you understand one another's love language?

Premise: we all want to be loved in a certain way. BUT, we tend to love others that same way. We think, if this means so much to me, why not extend this to my spouse?

Chose your top three ways of wanting to be loved, and predict your spouses:

Husband  
Mine    Hers

Wife  
Mine    His

1. Giving me things
2. Helping with chores
3. Listening and sympathy  
compassion
4. Talking: letting me know  
what you're thinking
5. Physically warm, tender  
affectionate
6. Affirming me; telling  
what you like about me
7. Standing up for me
8. Changing things that  
bother me
9. Spending time with me
10. giving me freedom/space

## The World of Feelings

In a marital relationship the ability of two individuals to be aware of the whole range of feelings, to express them appropriately, and to accept them in themselves and in each other, can pave the way for increased self-awareness and for stronger bonds of trust and deeper intimacy. It may make each partner more vulnerable, too. But perhaps the potential for self-awareness and growth and for increased trust is worth the risk.

1. In our relationship, when we relate together, I am happiest when:
2. In our relationship, when we relate together, I am saddest when:
3. In our relationship, when we relate together, I am angriest when:
4. The best thing about our relationship is:
5. I feel most afraid when:
6. I feel loved when:
7. I feel appreciated when:
8. My greatest concern/fear for our marriage is:
9. What I like most about myself is:
10. What I dislike most about myself is:
11. What I like most about you is:
12. My greatest fear/concern for you is:
13. The feelings I have most difficulty sharing with you are:
14. The feelings I can share most easily are:
15. Right now I feel .....towards you.
16. Right now I feel ..... towards myself.

# Communication Jammers Inventory

Him

Her

Clamming up

Hinting instead of forthrightness

Being slow to admit when wrong

Piling on when the other admits they're wrong

Problem-centered vs. solution-centered

Exaggeration (you always, you never)

Defensive (make excuses, reject criticism)

Hitting below the belt (hurtful statements)

Know-it-all (quick to analyze, I told you so)

Jumping to conclusions

Interrupting

Sending mixed messages

Aborting with early apology

Change subject/bring up past

Cold Shoulder

Belittle feelings

Use scare tactics

## Eight Ways Husbands Hurt Their Wives

According to reports of many wives, their husbands can say or do hurtful things without intending to do so or realizing it. Here are the most common:

1. Frequently criticizes you
2. Doesn't pay attention to your words, ideas
3. Doesn't assume enough of the household responsibilities
4. Your needs and desires are always secondary to his activities
5. Tries to explain your hurts instead of trying to empathize with feelings.
6. Acts as if he is superior and you are inferior.
7. Shows preference to others.
8. Doesn't go out of his way to add romance to the relationship.

## Differences Between the Sexes

### Mental/Emotional

Intuition vs. logic

Personal vs. ideas

Butterfly (sensitive to changes going on around) vs. buffalo (rough, plough on)

### Physical

Large biological differences, even at cell level; metabolism slower in women/ skeletal

### Sexual

Women stimulated by words and touch/ attracted to personality, tenderness, consideration

Men wired for sight/ difference between an iron and a light switch

### Need

Men need to be admired, accepted, appreciated, advice deemed valuable

Women need tenderness, support, help, understanding

## Keys to a Lasting Marriage

In a survey of 186 couples, married at least 15 years, the following were found to be the essential ingredients to a happy marriage\*:

1. Commitment to marriage
2. Good communication
3. Vital spiritual life
4. Effective conflict resolution
5. Positive impact from others (constructive friendships)
6. Sexual intimacy
7. Fun, leisure, humor
8. Realistic expectations
9. Serving each other
10. Personal growth as an individual

\* When a Mate wants Out, Shelly and Jim Conway, Zondervan, 1992, p.169.

# Physical Oneness

## Boundaries:

We all understand boundaries. Think of the difference between the way you would act toward a stranger on the sidewalk in front of your house, to what happens inside in the bedroom behind closed doors. To go from the one to the other requires many stages of growing in friendship, trust, listening, spending time together, laboring together, seeking one another's best interest, effective communication, etc.

## A. Purposes

1. Procreation  
(everyone clear on "plumbing issues?")
2. Fun
3. Communication

## B. Barriers

1. Ignorance
2. Lack of communication
3. Boredom
4. Fatigue

## C. Issues

1. Kids
2. Birth Control;
3. Honeymoon cystitis
4. Don't persist with problems

Resource: Ed Wheat, Intended for Pleasure

# Money

## Principles

1. Trust is indispensable.
2. Don't spend what you don't have; live within your means.
3. Make a budget and stick by it.
4. Give faithfully to the Lord
5. Save for unexpected needs
6. Set aside funds for fun.
7. Discuss large purchases