

THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

Jordan Fowler's Wedding Policy

Marriage is a holy and sacred union made before God. It is the second most important decision you will ever make, the first being, “What am I going to do with Jesus Christ?” As the officiating pastor who ordains this crucial decision by stating, “Now by the power vested me by the State of Texas and more importantly by God, I pronounce you husband and wife,” I feel responsible to make sure you are fully prepared for your new life together. We are preparing you as a couple for marriage, not just a wedding ceremony. Pre-marital counseling is a vital part of the process. I require 6 counseling sessions with you as a couple where we begin to focus on life purpose and intimacy, deal with potential future conflicts, and learn to seek after God as our ultimate source of strength.

THE PREPARATION COVENANT

As a Pastor

I am covenanting with you to use my best effort to give you Godly wisdom to prepare you for a new life together. I will be prepared for each session and will make it meaningful and beneficial.

As a Couple

You will covenant with one another to make an investment in your marriage by being faithful to seek after God diligently and fulfill each assignment with your full effort.

With One Another, God and the Pastor

God describes marriage as His picture of Christ’s love for His bride the Church. Christ makes the Church holy as she submits to His leadership.

Ephesians 5

¹Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³²This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

God’s picture shown in these verses becomes vital for the preparation of your marriage. With this in mind, the following guidelines must be met before I will agree to perform the marriage ceremony.

Sexual Purity

The Ephesians passage clearly declares that the husband is to make the wife holy. This extends into the area of sexual purity. For this reason, I will not perform the service of couples who are living together. If you find yourself in such a situation, one of you will need to “move in with

mom or a friend” in the full sense of the term. I will also ask you to be sexually abstinent and avoid overtly tempting situations during your marital preparation. Regardless of your past sexual behavior with others or one another, God forgives and restores. He also gives us the power in Christ through the Holy Spirit to walk as we should without a hint of immorality. Even if you have been sexually active in the past, it will be spiritually and emotionally healthy for you to back away from this behavior.

I realize some couples would say, “We’ve already slept together, so what does it matter?” It does. A brief analogy helps us here. If I were driving my car into the garage and happened to hit the side wall of the garage with the front fender, it wouldn’t be smart of me to say, “Oh well, I’ve already hit the front fender; I might as well keep driving in.” This would do further damage. The prudent thing to do would be to stop, back up, and re-approach the garage. If you have had past sexual experiences with one another, you need to stop, back up, and re-approach your marriage from God’s perspective of sexual purity. He will honor this step of obedience.

If you have been faithful to remain sexually pure, this is ideal as you will best exemplify and experience God’s picture of a bride and groom uniting. If you haven’t, God still offers forgiveness, restoration and healing.

Honesty

Your premarital counseling and marriage will only be healthy if honesty is the bedrock of all communication. It does you or me no good to be dishonest about your thoughts and feelings during the sessions. Please do not candy coat or water down your communication. Nothing you tell me will shock me, and everything shared will remain confidential. If you are tempted to hide a feeling, thought, or action from your partner, remember that it is much better if we deal with any issues before the wedding rather than afterwards.

I will be honest with you as well. If we find you have an issue which will make it difficult to be in a healthy marriage and I know that issue cannot be healed before the wedding date, I will

let you know that we need to push the date back, perhaps indefinitely. If I don’t feel that time will make a difference, I will let you know clearly why I don’t feel you should get married to one another. At that time, I will decline to officiate your ceremony. Ninety-nine percent of the time this isn’t a last-minute discovery as we tend to find any deep issues that need addressing quite early.

Seeking God

You need to be seeking God in prayer, personal worship and Bible reading throughout the process. Having a growing relationship with God is the cornerstone of a thriving marriage. We will discuss each of your spiritual pilgrimages in our first session.

Thank you for considering me to be a part of the beginning of your lives as a married couple. I am honored that you have requested that I be involved. If you have any questions, you can call me at NorthWood, 817.431.2088 x152 or email me, jordanfowler@northwoodchurch.org.

THE SESSIONS

Costs

Premarital tool costs \$117

Most couples will spend multiple times this amount on the ceremony. These tools will be a great return on investment.

Includes:

Sacred Marriage book x 2 @ \$15 each
Prepare-Enrich Marriage Test @ \$35
Insights Personality Test x 2 @ \$26 each
In addition, I will loan you my Financial Peaces CD's

Honorarium \$ Your Discretion

The amount you pay me is at your discretion. Most immediately ask, "How much do you normally get for the counseling and ceremony?" Generally, the amount is \$225-300. I don't require a certain amount nor would I want money to disqualify me from ministering to you as a couple. If there are travel, hotel or fuel expenses, I would greatly appreciate your covering those in addition to any honorarium you feel led to give.

Session Topics

We will cover the following areas addressing the topics that the Prepare-Enrich Test reveal are areas needing improvement.

Introductory Session and Spiritual Pilgrimage
God's Picture of a Great Marriage
Family of Origin and "In-Laws" in the Marriage
Finances as a Couple
Marital Expectations
Communication
Conflict Resolution
Ceremony Planning and Design
Additional time on other issues as needed