

## How to get married

- Search the Scriptures about singleness as well as marriage. Take your view of singleness and marriage from Scripture and not from culture (e.g. 1 Cor. 7; Matt. 19). We may not all get married and will certainly spend a good portion of our lives single. Singleness is not always just a circumstantial imposition – it can be seen as a calling. Marriage is not the solution to all our problems. It is not necessary to express our sexuality to be fully human.
- Who to marry?
  - o Someone of the opposite gender. Cannot take this for granted any more in our context. We need to have biblical (not just cultural) convictions about this.
  - o A believer.
  - o Even more, someone who has the same heart for the gospel, who is wanting to talk with you about Jesus, who encourages you in the Lord.
  - o Likely to be someone in your circle of friends, church, a course. Good to get to know within context of a group. Observe character.
- Don't flirt. Use words wisely and be aware of what's going on and how things could be interpreted. Let things be clear. Be open and clear and honest about your intentions but also guard your and their hearts. Communicate well so you both know what's going on – don't just let things drift and develop - without piling on undue pressure and expectation.
- You can give without loving but you can't love without giving. Be careful the intention of the gift is clear and not the meaning is not unhelpful.
- Let the man take the initiative and propose. Proposal could be first a proposal to get to know each other better, start exploring the path towards marriage, and then later the proposal to marriage itself.
- Engagement is a strong commitment.
- Man should usually ask the father of the intended girl. And often in our traditional cultures it will be the older relatives of the man who will actually do the asking and negotiating with the girl's father and his family. Although no hard and fast rules.
- Be careful when to introduce friend to parents – probably best to wait until there is a very strong commitment and likelihood of marriage. On the first visit it would normally (culturally) be good to invite a few other close friends and relatives. In most of our cultures there will be about three visits involving both families.
- Go for a **simple** marriage – doesn't have to be flashy and costly – but it is good to make promises, have witnesses and the presence of your Christian family.
- Appoint a best couple (9 months – 1 year before marriage) – a wise married couple you can look up to as an example. Take initiative to seek them out and have time together.
- Commit to a local church where you can go together as you approach marriage. Take advantage of marriage prep sessions.
- Think about a wedding planning committee – not essential but performs a social function – communicates communal sharing in one another's lives.

## **Sexual abstinence before marriage**

- Don't think we're immune from temptation or above these things
- "Not even a hint" – e.g. suggestive phone conversations, SMSs, Facebooking
- Touching – including hugging, kissing – is best preserved for the security of marriage
- Don't think you can play with fire and share a house let alone a bed
- Avoid an overlong engagement – move relatively quickly to a simple wedding
- Have good mentors and friends
- Beware pornography and its twin – masturbation. Self-centred, corrupting the heart and effectively adultery in the mind.
- In the unfortunate, ungodly, hopefully unlikely event you do sleep together – make confession to best couple, be accountable, find forgiveness, repent (turn away and don't let it become habitual) – be aware of danger of unsafe sex and that a baby could be on the way (abortion is not an option and even emergency contraception can in some cases be an abortion). We will continue to love you but cohabitation and immorality are a discouragement to brothers.
- Above all guard your heart, the wellspring of life. Feed your heart with Christ and find your satisfaction and joy and delight in Him. Search the Scriptures for Him and for who you are in Him. Live as beloved children of light.

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