



**Village
Bible
Church**

Wedding Guidelines & Request Form

3/1/2019

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Wedding Policy of Village Bible Church

Congratulations on your decision to get married! Thanks for giving us an opportunity to minister together the purpose of God through your wedding. Believing that marriage is ordained of God and that it receives His highest approval, we want to do all we can to help you honor Him in this special time in your life.

You are not only planning a ceremony but laying the foundation for your marriage relationship. We want to help make the ceremony beautiful and the marriage strong and healthy. Marriage is the first human relationship created by God, and He has graciously given us His Word and His Holy Spirit to guide us and strengthen us for life and all its relationships. Our desire is that you will experience His direction in these months of planning for your big day...and a lifelong marriage beyond!

The marriage and wedding guidelines in this booklet are designed to help you fulfill and even surpass your expectations. Many of your questions will be answered in the following pages. We'll appreciate your careful review of each section.

Above all, we want your wedding to exalt Jesus Christ. It should be a joyful, holy occasion and should aim to glorify God. Ask yourselves, "How can we best honor the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm our love for Him, for each other, for our families, and for our friends in this ceremony?"

Basic Guidelines for Weddings at VBC?

1. Clearly from the Scriptures, God performs the wedding and since He is present, it is a worship service.
2. A wedding ceremony is a function of the local church. Accordingly, weddings ceremonies will be available to active members of Village Bible Church who are in good standing.

An individual who has longstanding connections to Village Bible Church and is a member in good standing at another like-minded Evangelical church may petition the guiding elders to be married at Village Bible Church. An example would be a student who has moved away for college and has become an active member at a church in their new community.

3. The Bible warns against and prohibits the marriage of a Christian and a non-Christian. “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14–18; see also Ezra 9, I Kings 11:1–10). Accordingly, we will not perform a ceremony for an unequally yoked couple.
4. The Bible encourages us to receive counsel from others. We take seriously the hesitation of parents or others in authority, or trusted individuals who have legitimate grounds for disapproving of the wedding. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” – which is the first commandment with a promise – “that it may go well with you and you may enjoy long life on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1–4; see also Proverbs 1:8–9). We will take any such counsel into consideration before approving a wedding.
5. Since marriage is for all of life, we will not perform a wedding for someone who has a former living spouse who has not remarried. (1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2–3)
6. Since our elders/pastors reflect the very nature of our fellowship, one of them shall be involved in the entire wedding process. If you would like for an elder/pastor from another church to perform your wedding, he must be approved by the Board of Elders.
7. Most importantly, we will ask you to do some serious reflection and discussion regarding the role Jesus Christ plays in your life, your commitment to follow Him and ways faith might nurture and encourage you in your marriage. We will want to know that you can subscribe in both principle and practice to the Christian concepts for marriage.

Wedding Approval Process

A. Final authority—Ultimate authority for wedding approval and placing the wedding on the calendar lies with the Board of Elders.

B. Procedural outline:

1. Schedule a preliminary session with your campus pastor. It is recommended that you begin this process at least six to nine months prior to your wedding date.
2. Fill out the wedding information pages at the back of this booklet:
 - a. Wedding Information Form: At this time, you may not have all the information requested in this form—just fill out what you do know.
 - b. Facility Use Agreement: Facility guidelines and fees are listed in this section. Adjustments and changes are anticipated over the months of planning. Any balance should be paid two weeks prior to the wedding.
 - c. Q&A: The groom and bride should each answer these questions individually on a separate piece of paper. This will take some effort but is an important first step in our dialog.
3. Complete pre-marital counseling as prescribed.
4. After the pre-marital counseling is completed, the pastor will make a recommendation to the Board of Elders. With their approval plans will proceed.
5. If your wedding is approved, our wedding coordinator will contact you to confirm your reservation and set an appointment to assist you with detailed planning. Throughout this process, the coordinator will be your point of contact for general questions or concerns.

C. Pastoral counseling:

1. There will be 5–10 counseling sessions plus the inventory session.
2. The reading of several books will be assigned.
3. Remaining morally pure will be expected.
4. There will be homework assignments between sessions: Bible studies, discussion questions, and heart searchings. One post-marital counseling session will be scheduled.

Coordinator & Planning

Wedding and Facilities Coordinator

- The wedding and facilities coordinator will be in charge of your wedding.
- She will contact and meet with you to discuss your wedding plans (wedding and rehearsal dates, times, order of service, etc.) after you turn in your wedding information sheet.
- She will assist you with wedding preparations and will be able to answer any questions you may have throughout the process. She will be with you during the rehearsal and through the processional on your wedding day to assure that everything is in order for your ceremony. She will be there through the time you leave the building.

Planning

- Because of ongoing ministry needs, weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays and only on a limited number of Saturdays. Friday weddings are the easiest to gain approval for.
- Weddings should begin at a time that will allow for vacating the family and property by 9:00 pm on Saturdays, midnight Monday–Friday.
- Music and musicians for the wedding must be approved by the officiating pastor.
- The instrumentalist and vocalist should be contacted and met with at least two months before the wedding to go over the music for the wedding. This includes processional, recessional, solos, etc. Let pianist know of any special requests for prelude or postlude music. Please inform wedding coordinator of any extra sound requirements. Village Bible Church does not provide musicians but will give suggestions.

Checklist:

- Complete and turn in wedding information forms in this booklet.
 - Wedding Information and Agreement
 - Q & A
- Complete pre-marital counseling as prescribed.

If your wedding is approved:

- Meet with the wedding coordinator. Add other meetings as necessary.
- Coordinate vocalists and musicians.
- Determining the wedding service details.
- Create your wedding program.
- Gain approval from officiating pastor regarding wedding music and musicians.
- Obtain marriage license within 30 days of the wedding.
- Purchase and plan decorations and their removal after the ceremony. Assign someone to be responsible to take down decorations after wedding.
- Arrange for floral deliveries
- Pay final Village Bible Church fees – balance is due two weeks prior to the wedding.
- If holding your reception at the church, DJ retainer of \$400 and song list for approval is due 2 weeks prior to wedding. (Song list recommended 4 weeks prior.)
- Final meeting with coordinator
- Plan Rehearsal: A rehearsal date and time will be scheduled at the same time your wedding day is set on the church calendar. The wedding and facilities coordinator will coordinate your rehearsal and will be present throughout your wedding to assist in any way. Anyone involved in the service should attend the rehearsal, including musicians, vocalists, and the wedding party. Bring your:
 - Marriage Certificate
 - Unity Candles
 - Programs (if you are using them)
 - Aisle Runner
 - Guest Book & Pens

Wedding Facility Use & Decorating Guidelines

- The wedding party is responsible for setting up all personal decorations. The church will set up/take down all tables and chairs as discussed with the coordinator. Please submit total number of guests and a diagram of table set up at least one week before the wedding date.
- Village Bible Church property shall not be moved. Please walk around and check all rooms used and dispose of any decorations or personal items you do not want.
- VBC custodial staff will be responsible only for vacuuming, trash removal and restroom cleaning.
- No use of tobacco or alcohol in the building is permitted.
- Birdseed or bubbles are only to be used outside and must be cleaned up by the wedding party. No confetti or sparklers are allowed.
- Suitable protection must be provided for furniture, carpet, floors, etc. Any damage to the building, furniture, or equipment and/or any special cleaning required because of spilled food, candle wax, etc. shall be paid for by the wedding party.
- Decorations:
 - a. Decorations are the responsibility of the couple.
 - b. Decoration plans must be submitted to the wedding coordinator for approval.
 - c. Delivery of decorations, including floral, must be pre-arranged with the wedding coordinator.
 - d. The time slot in which you are permitted to decorate the Worship center will be discussed at the first meeting with your wedding coordinator.
 - e. Candles are permitted in the sanctuary but must be a dripless variety with suitable protection. (Bridal party supplies candles, candle lighters, etc.) No candles shall be placed on the piano. (Any damage done due to candle wax shall be paid for by the wedding party.)
 - f. Tacks, tape, and staples may not be used.
 - g. Bows may be put on the pews, attached only with rubber bands or something similar.
 - h. The center aisle in the sanctuary is 58 feet long (for runner).
 - i. Your decorations must be removed immediately after pictures or following the service.
 - j. All decorations must abide by the local municipality fire codes.

Reception Facility Use & Decorating Guidelines

We are excited to be celebrating this monumental event in your lives! God has a beautiful purpose in marriage, and we are thrilled to see you join in that blessing. In desiring to serve the Lord in *all* that we do, we have decided upon a standard of behavior, which must be followed during your event. This standard is not to be legalistic but rather to hold accountable our community for behavior that we teach our members to live daily. If you would like to use the gymnasium during your event, you must agree to our standard of behavior/policy.

Receptions may be held at the church.

- The wedding party is responsible for removing all belongings after the reception. Please walk around and check all rooms used and dispose of anything you do not want.
- Suitable protection must be provided for furniture, carpet floors, etc. Any damage to the building, furniture, or equipment and/or any special cleaning required because of spilled food, candle wax, etc. shall be paid for by the wedding party.
- Decorations:
 - a. Candles are permitted on the tables only and must be protected by glass globes.
 - b. A faux ceiling can be achieved by stringing lights across the gym. If this is desired, advanced planning is required for \$300.
 - c. All other guidelines listed above under Wedding Decorating Guidelines apply to the reception decorating.

Reception DJ & Dancing Guidelines

The standard of behavior/policy holds that all music and dancing will be a display of Godly behavior which is portrayed in Scripture.

The means by which this standard will be upheld:

- Only music that is on the VBC approved song list may be used.
- If you would like to use a song that is not on the approved list and believe it meets the criteria below, you may submit a song for consideration at least one month prior to wedding date. Only the approved songs that were submitted will be allowed for playing during event.
- No music or dancing which promotes lifestyles/behaviors/beliefs contradictory to the Bible will be played. If, during the event, a member of the church staff deems a song to be in contradiction to policy, you will discontinue the playing of that song.

Examples:

- Drunkenness
 - Adultery
 - Sexual activity
 - Drugs
 - Vulgar language
 - Gang association
 - Stealing, Lying, Cheating
 - Demonic themes
-
- The DJ will not encourage any dancing that promotes promiscuous behavior. i.e. Bumping and grinding, Shimmying, Roll up/Roll down move, etc.
 - The DJ will not encourage any gang related dance moves. i.e. Crip walk, Heel toe, or sign throwing.
 - The DJ himself will not speak, act, or promote any lifestyles/behaviors/ beliefs contradictory to the Bible during his/her time on church property.
 - The DJ will be required to submit a \$400 retainer at least two weeks prior to the wedding along with his/her song list (recommended 4 weeks prior). Any deviation from this approved song list will result in a forfeiture of the retainer.

Thank you for complying with our policy regarding music and dancing; we appreciate you supporting our desire to honor God in all our activities.

Dear DJ,

Thank you for the services that you will be providing for the bride and groom who will be getting married at our church! We are excited to have you serve them.

In order for you to provide your services, you must agree to the same guidelines and restrictions the bride and groom agreed to according to Village Bible Church's policies regarding dancing and musical choices.

- Only music that is on the VBC approved song list may be used.
- If you would like to use a song that is not on the approved list and believe it meets the criteria below, you may submit a song for consideration at least one month prior to wedding date. Only the approved songs that were submitted will be allowed for playing during event.
- No music or dancing which promotes lifestyles/behaviors/beliefs contradictory to the Bible will be played. If, during the event, a member the church staff deems a song to be in contradiction to policy, you will discontinue the playing of that song.

Examples:

- Drunkenness
 - Adultery
 - Sexual activity
 - Drugs
 - Vulgar language
 - Gang association
 - Stealing, Lying, Cheating
 - Demonic themes
-
- As DJ, you will not encourage any dancing that promotes promiscuous behavior. i.e. Bumping and grinding, Shimmying, Roll up/Roll down move, etc.
 - As DJ, you will not encourage any gang related dance moves. i.e. Crip walk, Heel toe, or sign throwing.
 - As DJ, you will not speak, act, or promote any lifestyles/behaviors/beliefs contradictory to the Bible during your time on church property.
 - You are required to submit a \$400 retainer at least two weeks prior to the wedding along with your song list for final approval. (No exceptions.) Any deviation from this approved song list will result in a forfeiture of the retainer. This retainer check will be deposited upon receipt and a refund check issued after completion of wedding reception. Once you have successfully provided DJ services for 8 weddings at VBC, this retainer will no longer be required.

Thank you for complying with our policy regarding music and dancing; we appreciate you supporting our desire to honor God in all our activities. We are excited to have you join us in the celebration.

Wedding Costs

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Wedding Ceremony | \$500 | Required |
| Wedding Reception | \$500 or \$2/person (whichever is greater) | Required |
| Reception Tablecloths | \$10 / tablecloth | Available |
| Officiating Pastor & Musicians | <i>Honorarium</i> | Recommended |
| Drum Cage Removal | \$ 400 | Available |
| Parking Shuttle | \$ 300 | Required if exceeding parking capacity. |
| Reception Gym Faux Ceiling | \$ 300 | Available |

Costs:

- The use of VBC sound engineers, facilities coordinators, and custodians is required. VBC will pay these workers.
- Honorariums: no fees are set, but it is suggested that musicians and the pastor be remunerated \$100–\$250 for their ministries.

Size:

- If you expect to exceed our maximum number of people for a wedding, you will need to first seek special approval. If approved, we will need to utilize a parking shuttle and parking traffic control. This normally costs \$300–\$500.
- Ceremony Seating Maximum: Sugar Grove—550, Aurora—230, Indian Creek—100, Plano—300
- Reception Seating Maximum: Sugar Grove—400, Aurora—150, Indian Creek—75, Plano—225
- Parking Maximum: Sugar Grove—190 spaces, Aurora—110 spaces, Indian Creek—30 spaces, Plano—80 spaces

Wedding Request Form

(Please return to church secretary)

Bride: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mobile: _____

Groom: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mobile: _____

Campus you are an active member at: _____

Campus are you requesting for your wedding: _____

Requested Date of Rehearsal: _____ Time _____

Requested Date of Wedding: _____ Time _____

Number Expected for wedding: _____

Officiant: _____

Are you requesting the reception to be at the church? Yes No

Number expected for reception: _____

Start/end times for reception: _____

Who will oversee decoration take down/removal?

Person in charge: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Total fees from previous page: _____

This total is due 2 weeks prior to wedding.

I understand, and agree to, the guidelines set by Village Bible Church for the use of its facilities.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date of Approval: _____ Approved by: _____

Pre-Counseling Q&A

On a separate sheet of paper, individually complete the questions below:

1. Write a brief testimony of how each of you came to trust Christ as your Savior.
2. Have either of you been married before? If yes, explain circumstances.
3. How long have you been dating?
4. How long have you been engaged?
5. Why do you want to get married?
6. How do you know this person is right for you?
7. How do you know this is the right time for you to marry?
8. How do you know you are in love? How would you define love?
9. What initially attracted you to your intended partner?
10. How well do you feel you know your intended partner? Explain.
11. What are your greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses? What are your intended partner's strengths and weaknesses?
12. To the woman: Is your fiancé a godly spiritual leader? In what ways?
To the man: Is your fiancée a godly woman? In what ways?
13. How do your parents and family view your upcoming marriage? What about your peer group and friends? Is anyone opposed?
14. How are you gifted spiritually? How are you a complement spiritually to your intended partner?
15. What ministries have you been involved in, in the past? What ones are you currently involved in?
16. What are your own greatest struggles currently, and how are you dealing with them?
17. What do you feel you need to work on together as a couple before you marry?
18. Are you willing to break your engagement if it is the right and best thing?

20 Tests of Love in Considering a Potential Mate

In marriage, if there are too many differences in the basics, happiness cannot result. So many couples, head over heels in love, have found long before their first anniversary that they cannot stand each other. One couple said, "The one who makes a wonderful date makes a horrible mate." Another couple said before they were married their relationship was so good, they didn't know how it could be better. They weren't married very long before their relationship was so bad, they didn't see how it could be worse. The current divorce rate proves that there are real problems in many marriage relationships, yet those couples did not enter their marriage anticipating divorce. They often say, "It can't happen to us," yet it does. How can you stop the honeymoon from ending so soon? Indeed, God expects the marriage relationship to improve with age. Here are some tests to consider before you engage or marry to help you discern if your prospective marriage will get better or worse.

1. **Sharing Test.** Real love wants to share, to give, to connect. It thinks of the other, not of oneself. When you plan something, do you think of what you would like to do, or what the other one would enjoy – not how can he or she fulfill me but how can I fulfill them? As Hermann Oeser, a German author, has put it, "Those who want to become happy should not marry. The important thing is making the other one happy." The opposite of love is not hate, but selfishness! The one who is best equipped for marriage is the one who doesn't "need" to be married.

Test Question: Do I primarily want to become happy or make my mate happy? Am I consistently willing to give?

2. **Truth test:** Is your love strong enough to stand alone for the truth? Or is your love weak and co-dependent? Are we dependent on each other in an unhealthy way (idolatry), rather than trusting in God's grace and truth to meet our needs? Are we afraid to be honest with each other for fear of not getting our needs met; or is our love strong enough in Christ to be able to encourage and build one another up in truth, even if my partner reacts poorly?

Test Question: Are we able to speak the truth in love?

3. **Talk Test.** One of the greatest problems in marriage is lack of communication. Can you expose your deep hopes, hurts, and fears to one another with the confidence that it will not be ridiculed or used as a weapon later on? Does your partner appreciate your feelings? Is he/she sensitive to your thoughts, interested in and desirous of knowing the real you? Does he/she draw you out? Are there subjects you cannot discuss because you both see RED? Are some subjects taboo because they only incite quarrels? Can you ask each other questions kindly and draw each other out? Can you gently probe and listen rather than pouncing on comments or be planning a rebuttal? Are you able to communicate at a deep heart level as friends or are communications usually surface, talking mostly about the activities you do?

Test Question: Do we really communicate?

4. **Respect Test.** You may like the other person, but is there respect? Would you want your children to be like your prospective mate? List positive and negative character traits and ask if they're Christ-like. How does your potential mate treat family members and others? Are you proud of your partner and his/her career plans and life goals?

Test Question: Do we deeply respect each other?

5. **Purity Test.** Sex is not a test of love. Physical involvement can easily cloud your marriage decision making. Sexual enjoyment is maximized by first having spiritual and emotional intimacy (consider the other test questions). Ask yourself: Is physical and sexual attraction the core of my love for my partner or is it a by-product of deep friendship and emotional bonds? Do you "love" the person you're dating or "lust" for them? For romantic fulfillment without shame, the order in Genesis 2:24-25 should be followed which says "a man will leave his father and mother (wedding) and be united to his wife (commitment), and they will become one flesh (sex)." Waiting until marriage for sex builds up an anticipation that never loses its edge. It is always fresh and clean. Premarital sexual abstinence is proof of love, value and respect for your future mate. Love is patient. Lust can't wait.

Test Question: Are we willing to set aside self-gratification and wait for God's timing on sex?

6. **Friends Test.** Do you enjoy your partner's friends? Birds of a feather flock together. You can't choose your family, but you do choose your friends and have responsibility for that. If you do not like your partner's friends, there may be things about your partner that you don't like.

Test Question: Do we enjoy each other's friends?

7. **Leisure Test.** Do you enjoy the same hobbies and activities? Would you be best of friends apart from romance? Discuss and prioritize your interests in music, sports, watching TV, outdoors, time alone, reading, crafts, and where you like to go. Are your interests conflicting?

Test Question: Do we enjoy leisure time together?

8. **Quarrel Test.** Have you had a real quarrel, not just a casual difference of opinion, but a real disagreement? Do you have the ability to be reconciled to each another? Drawing out each other's opinions and challenging each other in love and humility is what helps you grow. Seek unity but never at the price of sacrificing your integrity. Are you consistently able to ask forgiveness when you are wrong? This skill must be learned and tested before marriage. Do you move toward each other in an understanding way, in spite of your differences or do disagreements become a wedge in your relationship? Do you harbor grudges or withdraw from the relationship? Do you consider divorce an option if you were to marry? If you don't consider divorce an option, it exerts a beneficial pressure to solve problems quickly.

Test Question: Are we humble and forgiving to one another?

9. Endurance Test. Look ahead 35 years—do you think you can live with this person for the rest of your life and be happy when he/she may be much like his/her parents? Can you see yourself in a lifelong, satisfying, God-honoring relationship? If not, end the relationship now and don't defraud the one with whom you are spending time.

Test Question: Do we foresee loving each other when we're old and gray, through thick and thin?

10. Separation Test. Is your love secure and strong enough to survive distance and separation or have you just always "been together"? Are you equally committed to the relationship in times of absence? Do you find yourself cherishing the friendship even more in times of absence?

Test Question: How have we done being apart?

11. Spiritual Test. Is your future mate a confessing, consistent Christian? 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 says, "Do not be unequally yoked." Are you absolutely sure this person is a believer? If you have any doubt about this, probably the person is not. Pursue a mate who actively pursues God, as God is the source of love.

Test Question: Are we equally yoked in being believers?

12. Parental Test. What do your parents think about you getting married? Why? Have you asked them? If not, do so as soon as possible. Sound them out about this matter. Although parents are not infallible, they love you and want your best in most cases. Secondly, they understand you better than anyone else. Often you are very much like them. If they disapprove, ask them specifically why. Promise them you will not marry until you have their approval. If they are opposed to your marriage and it is really, truly of God, expect God to change their hearts until you have approval.

Test Question: Have our parents given approval for marriage?

13. Life-calling Test. Do you have the same vision, purpose, and goals in life? Do you understand God's purpose for your lives? It is important that you know where you're going together in this major decision of marriage.

Test Question: Are we going the same direction in life?

14. Love and Submission Test. A wife is a helpmate (Genesis 2:18). Do you have goals that agree or conflict? To the man: Are you willing to put your wife first—before your career, pleasure, success, and children? Are you willing to live your life for her and love her according to Ephesians 5:15? To the woman: Are you willing to submit yourself to him for life? Can you submit yourself willingly and cheerfully, or do you want to pursue an independent life as a Ms. Instead of a Mrs.? To both of you: Do you see how you can be more effective for the Lord in marriage than by being single? Are you experiencing increased effectiveness right now? How are you envisioning following the Lord together?

Test Question: Are we willing to love and submit to the Lord and to each other?

15. Will of God Test. Do you have firm convictions that this is God’s will and not a feeling that this is the one to whom I should commit? Don’t marry because friends expect it or because you feel it would be so difficult to break up or because you feel sorry for the person and think you can help solve his/her problems. Seek perspective from mature, godly individuals who know you well and who understand God’s Word.

Test Question: Do I have reasonable certainty that this relationship is in God’s will?

16. Habit Test. Does your partner have habits that annoy you? Don’t marry with the idea these will improve. They likely will not and usually get worse because you let your guard down after marriage.

Test Question: Will you accept each other just as you are?

17. Financial Test. There should be evidence of financial responsibility. Financial problems are one of the primary factors leading to divorce. Do you spend your money wisely, with reserve? Are you saving money? Do you tithe? Are you willing to live on one income so the wife can mother young children?

Test Question: Can we handle financial obligations?

18. Home Test. How does your partner act at home? How does he/she treat the family? How does he/she keep house? After marriage, he/she will tend to treat you, your children and your home the same way. If he/she is thoughtless of the family, he/she will be thoughtless of you, no matter how “bad” he/she says the family is and they do not understand him/her. If there is no respect for family, once the novelty of marriage wears off, you will witness the same attitudes and behaviors. Watch closely in the home setting to see if you like what you see.

Test Question: Do we witness right relations and care?

19. Children Test. Do you really want children? How many? When? Who will discipline them? Who will give them their spiritual training? What dreams and ambitions do you have for your children? Have you discussed these issues and come to a reasonable unity?

Test Question: Is there agreement on having children and how they’ll be raised?

20. Time Test. Two years of knowing one another well is safest. We usually suggest a year before you become engaged. Have you seen each other in many situations—for example sickness, stress, angry at work, etc.?

Test Question: Do we know each other well enough?

CONCLUSION: Do you want your marriage to be a success, to be happy, to last? Then evaluate the results of these test questions honestly. The honesty may save you tons of sorrow later. You do not need to score 100% to succeed (except the spiritual and parental test). But you should have enough similarities that you will enjoy each other for life. A few minor differences may cause you to challenge each other if it is of God.

Danger Signs for the Not Yet Married

By Anthony Florio

1. A general uneasy feeling about the relationship. Lack of inner peace. A nagging, aching, disturbing feeling inside that says, "Something is wrong." Don't ignore that feeling. It may be your own temporarily numbed common sense, or it may be God's Spirit trying to communicate something to you. People have admitted that they knew the marriage was a mistake even as they were walking down the aisle.
2. Avoiding discussing sensitive subjects because you are afraid of hurting your partner's feelings or starting an argument. You find yourself thinking things like I'd better not talk about this; I wish he/she would show me more affection; I wish he/she would not treat his/her mother so mean; I wonder why he/she has a temper tantrum when he/she gets a flat tire; I wish he/she would shower more often.
3. Getting more involved physically. You resolve to limit the acceleration of your physical intimacy but find that on each new date you start again at the place where you left off. Sometimes couples get involved physically as a way to avoid arguments. This may be a danger sign that your relationship may remain on a physical level throughout your courtship and marriage. After you are married, you may not like the personality that goes with the body.
4. You find yourself constantly doing what your partner wants you to do, always giving in, being accommodating. This could indicate a selfish, domineering partner or a serious insecurity on your part.
5. You feel you are staying in the relationship through fear. For example, if thoughts like these go through your mind: I wish I could get out of dating him/her, but I'm afraid of what he/she might do to me, or he/she might commit suicide. I feel trapped and I could not stand the guilt if something happened. What will others think if we broke up?
6. Your partner continually makes excuses for not finding a job. He or she borrows money from you frequently. The partner who evades responsibility and who can't manage his/her money wisely will be a marriage risk.
7. Your partner is overly jealous, suspicious, or possessive of you; questions your every word; feels that everyone is against him/her.
8. Parents and other significant people are strongly against your marriage. Consider their reasons before you make a final decision.
9. Do you have few areas of common interest?
10. Your partner treats you contemptuously, is constantly critical, uses biting sarcasm, or frequently argues. You're never sure how the date will end. There's more fighting than fun, creating a tense, unhealthy atmosphere.
11. Inability to accept constructive criticism. Doesn't apologize when wrong.

A few of these factors don't necessarily rule out a marriage partner, but they are danger signs and indicate the need for counseling and serious discussion. Better to heed the signals than to enter into a marriage and live with the consequences.