

Chapter 6: Engagement

This is when the couple publicly declares their intention to get married. They have come to the mutual decision that they want to spend the rest of their lives together. Prior to this public declaration, they obtained the blessing of their parents, and their friends agree that they are great for each other. Once the guy presents the girl with an engagement ring, the happy couple then set about planning the wedding day. The process of merging two very different people together and their families – with all the background and culture – can prove very challenging, but not unusual.

Your Questions

Question 1

Now that we are engaged, can we relax our physical boundaries?

Answer 1

No! But this is a good time to revise your physical boundaries. Most couples during this phase should be tightening their boundaries rather than relaxing them. Remember, do whatever it takes to keep pure. There are couples who have broken their engagement at the last minute, but because they kept pure until the end they were able to go their separate ways with integrity. Having honored each other and God, they were able to save themselves sexually for that special someone they would call husband/wife.

Question 2

If we went too far (physically) at any point during our relationship, but later discover that either one or both don't love each other, do we have to get married?

Answer 2

No! You've heard the saying "two wrongs don't make a right". That's really true in this situation. It means you can't fix the situation by getting married. The person that you marry deserves someone that loves them completely, and you deserve someone who loves you completely. It's not enough for only one person in the relationship to do all the loving, and sex should NOT be used to manipulate a relationship. So if you have done the wrong thing, even resulting in pregnancy, come clean and confess. You may NOT need to marry the guy/girl in this case but whether you do or not, you will definitely need: Repentance, Forgiveness, Healing, and Cleansing. Without these you could be taking the pain of a moral failure into the next relationship. While God's grace is not a license to do the wrong thing, it is the key to a new beginning.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

What you Shouldn't do in the 'Engagement' Phase

1. Don't be strangers. Keep mixing with your friends.
2. Don't hang out alone in each other's apartments. Have friends over and leave when the friends leave.
3. Don't relax your physical boundaries. Purity during your relationship builds trust, security and faithfulness that extend into marriage. If you have self-control (discipline) during your relationship, then you will have self-control when you are married and someone outside your marriage tempts you. And you won't need to feel suspicious of how your partner will respond under pressure!
4. Don't leave all the wedding arrangements for your fiancé to organize. Share the responsibilities and enjoy this time together.

Tips for Engagement

1. We recommend a short engagement. Physical attraction can be pretty intense during this phase and the longer you have to wait the harder it gets. So don't put unnecessary pressure/temptation on yourselves by making this period too long
2. It's important that you continue to maintain your boundaries! Many couples make the mistake of going too far during this phase. They rationalize: "Oh, we will get married soon, so it's OK, isn't it?"

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Here, the New Testament Greek: 'Porneos' means all forms of sexual activity outside of marriage, translated in this scripture as sexual immorality. Now, just to bring a balance, God isn't prudish about sex. He created it and made it 'very, very good.' There is a whole book in the Bible dedicated to this subject, celebrating its fullest expression in marriage. It's called 'Song of Solomon' and it's enough to make anyone blush and sing. It's an

honest and beautiful picture of how we can honor each other and God with our bodies.

3. Share your finances/salary information.

4. We encourage all engaged couples to go through a marriage preparation course, or some kind of marriage workshop to help them get off to a great start. We don't just want to see couples prepare for a great wedding day, but we want to see them prepare for a great marriage.

Question

What areas of the engagement process you would like to focus on?

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