

Ten Commandments for Couples

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A wedding is a festive occasion, one of parties, celebrations, and gift giving. You can participate in this special occasion for an engaged friend by using the suggested plan which follows. The ceremony is sort of a commissioning service for the couple as they establish a Christian home. In giving a Bible, you will encourage them to keep the Bible until they meet a non-Christian friend. Urge them to give the Bible away as a witness through their home.

When to do it

You can present the Bible at any occasion. Consult the bride to find a convenient time for her. Encourage her to choose a time when her fiancé can attend. After you decide on the time and place, make sure everyone knows about it. Close friends of the bride may want to attend, and she may want to invite some special guests.

Arrangements

The plans call for a leader and ten speakers. You may want to have fewer readers take two or more parts. If you have musical talent within your group, arrange for special music before the leader begins. Arrange your meeting area allowing for a central area for speakers; however, the focal point should be the prospective bride and groom. Since this presentation is written in a casual, friendly style, speakers may want to remain seated on the front row or facing the bride and groom in a circle.

Choose in advance the women who will participate. If they become familiar with their parts, the presentation will be more effective. The script may be memorized or adapted to the speakers' own words. Plan to rehearse at least once before the presentation so speakers know exactly when to speak and what the others will be saying.

Decide how to end the ceremony. A simple song or special music may be selected, or you may choose to end in prayer.

You may wish to prepare a copy of the script for the bride to keep. Since the presentation is a list of suggestions for a happy marriage, this would be a special way for her to remember the presentation and the advice. Friends also may wish to write special notes or messages of encouragement to the couple.

Let the bride know why you are affirming her in this way. If her wedding is to be small, let her know that all those attending the gift Bible presentation won't expect a wedding invitation so she needn't feel obligated.

Presenting the Bible

Leader: As your Christian friends, we have watched with interest as your relationship has developed to the point you are making a unique commitment to each other.

The commitment called marriage is many things—a sacrament to the church and contract to the government. A Christian marriage is more than any contract, more even than a tie, more than oneness of aim, ambition, or love. It is a unity beyond analysis—one that cannot be separated into two distinct parts. The whole is greater than any two parts.

Hugh Prather has said, "Love, the magician, knows this little trick whereby two people walk in different directions yet always remain side by side." A Christian marriage is like that - two unique, different people become one through Christ.

Nothing is easier than saying words. But nothing is harder than living them each day. We want you to know that we care about the commitment you are making, and we support you in this important step.

As you prepare to marry, you will hear many suggestions about having a successful, happy life together.

As your friends, we want to share with you some advice for Christian couples.

Speaker 1: First, throw away the parachute. Too often today people enter into marriage with the idea that they can call it off at any time if things don't work out. Marriage is not a come-and-go-as-you-please relationship. Do not take lightly the commitment you are making. Expect your marriage to last forever, and do everything you can to make that expectation come true. (*Read Matt. 19:5.*)

Speaker 2: Establish a link with a church. Psalm 37:4 (TEV) says, "Seek your happiness in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires." A Christian home is a valuable asset to any community. Your marriage will be blessed and your personal lives enhanced as you become active members of a vital and growing church family.

Speaker 3: Look for the right models. Seek out a Christian couple whose marriage is strong, based on biblical principles. Develop a friendship with them, and ask for their secret to a successful marriage. Continue to look for Christian examples, but don't select your role models lightly. Pray about it, asking God to guide you to a couple who will be good teachers.

Speaker 4: Communicate with each other. A common complaint among people experiencing marital difficulties is a lack of communication. Share your innermost thoughts with each other. Tell each other your dreams and ambitions. And make sure you are really communicating. Did you say what you meant to say? Will she understand what you meant? Are you really telling your spouse how you feel, or are you telling him what you think he wants to hear?

Speaker 5: Remember-happiness doesn't come in things. Certainly you will want to establish a home and furnish it with a certain number of creature comforts. But don't get caught up in the joy of owning things. They don't last, and they won't make your marriage any happier if you are lacking the qualities that really matter. All your possessions can't take the place of love, honesty, respect, concern, or consideration. Your happiness lies with each other and in your relationship with Your Heavenly Father. (*Read Roman 15:13.*)

Speaker 6: Learn what love means. It's different for each of us. For you, it may be a quiet, deeply personal feeling while for your spouse, it may be a very open, affectionate display of emotions. You need to learn what your spouse thinks love is. Remember to carry your communication over into a real understanding of what love is for the two of you. Once you've decided what that all-important word means, don't put it under lock and key. Love grows and changes. It will be different each day as you grow and change with each other. (*Read 1 Cor. 13.*)

Speaker 7: Practice saying, "I love you." Those are three of the hardest words in the English language. But they are three of the most important. Learn to say them often, but don't say "I love you" just as a conditioned response. Mean what you say.

Speaker 8: Quit trying to change each other. You fell in love with a unique person; you wouldn't love him if he were someone else. Don't go into your marriage thinking you can make your partner someone else. Accept him for who he is, and remember that you love him, even with all the faults and all the strange ideas you never realized he had. If she does things differently than you're accustomed to, look at it as a

unique part of her personality. Learn from each other. Her way may be faster and easier than yours. And just because your parents always did it that way doesn't mean your spouse has to also.

Speaker 9: If you're in trouble, get help. There are many places to go for help if you want to. Seek out the counsel of a Christian friend or your pastor. Get professional help. Don't let problems fester until the wound is too deep to heal.

Speaker 10: Keep working at it. Many people think marriage is a 50-50 proposition. It's really more like 100-100. Each person must give willingly and generously. Sometimes you both give equally and receive equally. There are times, however, when things aren't so balanced. You may have to be the one who gives more today. Tomorrow, he may give 100 percent, and you may give nothing. Don't give up if things get hectic or if problems arise. You're living with the person you love with all your heart. Together you can work it out. That's the key-keep working.

Leader: All of these suggestions will help make your marriage a happy one. But remember, all the answers you'll ever need are found in God's Word. Look to Him daily for guidance.

We know that both of you have several Bibles of your own. We know that you plan to establish a Christian home which God can use to reach those in your community. WE are giving you this Bible today so that you can share your faith with someone who comes into your home who needs to know the hope and comfort of God's Word. With our blessing, give this Bible to that Person. We commission you to reach out to share Christ in every way you can. God will direct your paths; He will be with you at all times. Romans 8:38-39 (TEV) says, :For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below-there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord."

* *Good News Bible*, Today's English Version (TEV): Used by permission, American Bible Society.