



**FOCUS**  
ON THE FAMILY

## Resource List: The Early Years of Marriage

The resources listed here align with Focus on the Family's philosophy and mission. Call us at 1-800-A-FAMILY, or visit our online store at [store.focusonthefamily.com](http://store.focusonthefamily.com). (Information is regularly updated, but it's still possible that an item originally available from Focus on the Family is now unavailable.) You might also be interested in content posted on our website at [focusonthefamily.com](http://focusonthefamily.com).

### Included

[Books](#)  
[Broadcasts & DVDs](#)  
[Webpages, Q&As, and Resource Lists](#)  
[Referrals](#)

### Books

- The Antelope in the Living Room: The Real Story of Two People Sharing One Life** by Melanie Shankle (2014) • 9781414385549 •  
Shankle offers an inspiring and humor-filled look at the joys and challenges of marriage.
- Closer** by Jim and Cathy Burns (2010) • 9780764208607 •  
"Devotions to Draw Couples Together"
- Complete Guide to Faith-Based Family Finances** by Focus on the Family (2008) • 9781414323909 •  
Find wise counsel on money management, charitable giving, investments, debt management, and retirement.
- Complete Guide to the First Five Years of Marriage** by Focus on the Family (2006) • 9781589970410 •  
Focus on the Family's counseling staff answers your marriage questions.
- Covenant Marriage: Building Communication and Intimacy** by Dr. Gary Chapman (2003) • 9780805425765 •  
Chapman provides principles for a covenant marriage, including handling conflict and developing communication that can build intimacy and lead to ministry.
- Expectant Parents** by Suzanne Gosselin (2014) • 9781589977945 •  
"Preparing Together for the Journey of Parenthood"
- First Comes Love, Then Comes Money** by Bethany and Scott Palmer (2009) • 9780061649912 •  
"A Couple's Guide to Financial Communication"
- The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts** by Gary Chapman (2015) • 9780802412706 •  
Healthy communication is fostered by quality time, acts of service, affirming words, physical touch, and gifts. Chapman explains how to discover your primary personal style and use it to strengthen the bond with your spouse.
- Hedges** by Jerry B. Jenkins (2005) • 9781581346640 • (not currently available through Focus on the Family)  
In a culture that minimizes infidelity and its devastating effects, Jenkins gives strong and practical advice to stay faithful for life: Plant preventative hedges around your marriage to deal with temptation *before* it occurs.
- Little Book of Great Dates** by Dr. Greg Smalley and Erin Smalley (2013) • 9781589977723 •  
"52 Creative Ideas to Make Your Marriage Fun"

**Love for a Lifetime** by Dr. James Dobson (2014) • 9781430033011 •

Written for the engaged and newly married, find fundamentals of a Christian marriage and keys to an enduring relationship.

**A Marriage After God's Own Heart** by David Clarke, Ph.D. (2001) • 9781576737552 •

Cultivating *spiritual* intimacy can lead to marriage as the Lord truly intended. Recognize God's design for a relationship that's passionate, fun, deeply intimate, and sacred.

**The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment With the Wisdom of God** by Timothy Keller (2011)

• 9781594631870 •

Keller discusses difficulties couples often experience and shows how God's Word provides a blueprint for a healthy, loving, lifelong relationship.

**Ready to Wed: 12 Ways to Start a Marriage You'll Love** by Dr. Greg and Erin Smalley (2015) • 9781624054068 •

Primarily for engaged couples but also great for those newly married, this book explores important traits of a healthy marriage, including intimacy and conflict management.

**Ready to Wed Couple's Workbook** (2015) • 2350000000318 •

**Ready to Wed DVD Kit** (2015) • 2350000000455 •

**Sacred Marriage** by Gary Thomas (2015) • 9780310337379 •

"What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?" Discover how marriage develops Christ-like character—forgiveness, love, respect, and perseverance—in each of you.

**The Secret Language of Successful Couples** by Bill and Pam Farrel (2014) • 9780736955874 •

The Farrels offer scriptural principles, practical ideas, and plenty of humor to help you and your spouse connect heart-to-heart—to have more fun together, solve problems more efficiently, and more.

**Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Became Parents** by Gary Chapman (2016) • 9780802414748 •

"With warmth and humor [Chapman offers] practical advice on everything from potty training to scheduling, apologizing to your child, and keeping your marriage strong ... all the while celebrating the great joy that children bring."

**The Wonder Within You: Celebrating Your Baby's Journey From Conception to Birth** by Carey Wickersham (2014)

• 9781624051418 •

Sonograms, dietary and medical advice, and stories from experienced moms are combined to encourage 40 weeks of intentional and joyful pre-natal parenting.

**Your Marriage Can Survive a Newborn** by Glenn and Natalie Williams (2005) • 9780805440607 •

Be prepared for the "baby-bomb"—the effects of a newborn upon your marital relationship—with tips from those who've been there. Learn to strengthen your marriage as you face one of the most challenging times of your life: parenthood.

**Broadcasts & DVDs**

**Cherishing the Differences in Your Spouse** (Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley) • 9781624718144 •

The Smalleys offer a light-hearted look at common gender differences—and how those have played out in *their* marriage. They urge husbands and wives to focus on what's *good* about their spouse and *embrace* differences.

**Communicating About Intimacy in Early Marriage** (Bill and Pam Farrel) • 9781624715259 •

Focusing on the need for couples to understand each other's mindset about sexual intimacy and the God-given characteristics of this aspect of marriage, the Farrels help husbands and wives communicate about and prioritize intimacy.

**Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy in Your Marriage** (Dr. David Clarke) • 9781624710926 •

Marriage is more than just emotional and physical intimacy. *Spiritual* intimacy is the key ingredient to a healthy marriage, and Clarke shares thoughts about building unity in that area.

**Embracing God's Desire for Your Marriage** (Gary Thomas) • 9781683320326 •

Thomas describes covenant, committed marriage. Husbands and wives can experience ever-increasing joy when they're able to view their marriage as an act of worship to the Lord.

**Enjoying Intimacy As a Newlywed** (Dr. Juli Slattery) • 9781683320562 •

Slattery advises newlyweds on overcoming and avoiding common challenges to sexual intimacy.

**Establishing Healthy Boundaries With Your In-Laws** (Dr. Henry Cloud, Dr. John Townsend) • 9781624714733 •

Cloud and Townsend offer insights to help couples value their in-laws and build strong relationships with them, while also establishing their own family identity.

**Financial Advice for Young Couples** (Scott and Bethany Palmer) • 9781624710599 •

The Palmers share from their book *First Comes Love, Then Comes Money* how to effectively communicate about money.

**Friendship or Flirtation? Danger Signs for Couples** (Pastor Dave Carder) • 9781624718786 •

Learn the danger signs of friendships that could easily blossom into affairs. Carder shares how to become aware of inappropriate intimacy in “close-call” friendships.

**God’s Blueprint for a Healthy Marriage** (Dr. Timothy and Mrs. Kathy Keller) • 9781624710759 •

The Kellers outline God’s design for marriage. They offer stories from their marriage and remind listeners that marriage is intended to shape and mold each spouse and bring about their sanctification.

**The Importance of Leaving and Cleaving** (Pastor Ted Cunningham) • 2350000010874 •

Cunningham offers wisdom to newlyweds about the importance of separating emotionally, relationally, and financially from their families of origin so they can form a strong bond with each other.

**The Joys and Challenges of Marrying Your Opposite** (Melanie Shankle) • 2350000006976 •

With humor and compassion, Shankle discusses the differences between men and women—and how she and her husband have worked through issues like in-law relationships and illness.

**Making Marriage Work in a Social Media World** (Jim Daly, John Fuller) • 9781624711367 •

Social media has its place, but it can also have a negative impact on marriage. Learn where to draw the line on how much time you spend with these tools and how to define online relationships.

**Making Your Marriage a High Priority** (Kirk and Chelsea Cameron) • 2350000002350 •

The Camerons describe how their marriage was threatened by competing priorities of marriage, children, career, ministry, friends, hobbies, and more. They share tips to help couples guard their relationship.

**Managing Expectations in Marriage** (Dr. Greg Smalley) • 9781624712975 •

Smalley tells stories from his own marriage and answers questions about expectations and the disillusionment that can follow. He talks about developing strong communication, and he delves into some deeper issues behind potential conflicts.

**Overcoming Obstacles in Early Marriage** (Dr. Greg Smalley) • 9781624714382 •

The early years of marriage can bring some of the greatest joys—and biggest pitfalls. Whether a couple is talking about careers, finances, or intimacy, it’s important that they learn how to communicate in healthy ways and overcome selfishness.

**Practical Advice for Expectant Parents** (Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley, Mrs. Suzanne Gosselin) • 9781624718175 •

Guests share common feelings of couples as they anticipate the birth of their child. They also talk about the importance of being intentional in marriage, how to welcome help from others, and how to thrive spiritually during this new season.

**Practical Advice for New Parents** (Dr. Gary Chapman) • 2350000010492 •

Chapman shares from his book *Things I Wish I’d Known Before I Had Kids*. Expectant and new parents can make good choices for themselves, their marriage, and their kids.

**Practical Advice for Protecting Your Marriage** (Jerry B. Jenkins) • 9781624716959 •

Jenkins explains how couples can guard against infidelity in a discussion based on his book *Hedges: Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect It*.

**Practical Advice for Young Married Couples** (Dr. Greg Smalley) • 9781624714320 •

Smalley talks about facing and overcoming common challenges newly married couples face, including expectations, relationships with in-laws, gender differences, spiritual leadership, and sexual intimacy.

**Thriving in the Early Years of Marriage** (Bill and Pam Farrel) • 9781624715167 •

The Farrels talk about the joys and challenges of the first five years of marriage. Recognize God’s design for your relationship, and learn to carefully communicate with one another to strengthen your unity.



**Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts** (Zondervan) • 9780310875734 • DVD kit

Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott provide a firm foundation for couples stepping into an unfamiliar world. They focus on time-tested questions to debunk myths, bridge the gender gap, and help you develop skills you'll need for a loving and lasting future together as husband and wife. (The kit includes a 9-session DVD, one copy of the Parrotts' book, a leader's guide, one woman's workbook, and one man's workbook.)

**Focus on the Family  
Webpages, Q&As, and Resource Lists**

**Marriage**

- [focusonthefamily.com/marriage](http://focusonthefamily.com/marriage)

This section of our website houses online articles, resources, and referrals for several topics.

**Q&As**

- [focusonthefamily.com/family-q-and-a](http://focusonthefamily.com/family-q-and-a)

Browse our Q&As for advice and encouragement.

**Resource Lists**

- [focusonthefamily.com/family-q-and-a/resources-and-referrals](http://focusonthefamily.com/family-q-and-a/resources-and-referrals)

Find recommended resources and referrals listed by topic, including the following:

- **Family and Personal Finances** • RL004 •
- **Marital Challenges** • RL038 •
- **Marital Intimacy** • RL039 •
- **Marriage Materials** • RL016 •
- **Parenting** • RL017 •

**Referrals**

**Focus on the Family Counseling Consultation Line**

Focus on the Family offers a [free phone counseling consultation with a licensed counselor](#). They're here to listen and pray with you, as well as provide initial guidance and resources to help you and your family. Phone **1-855-771-HELP (4357)**, Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM (MT) to arrange a call back.

**Focus on the Family's Christian Counselor Network**

Search for licensed Christian counselors in your area: [FocusOnTheFamily.com/FindACounselor](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/FindACounselor)

**Hope Restored® marriage intensives—a ministry of Focus on the Family**

2175 Sunset Inn Road

Branson, MO 65616

866/875-2915

[hoperestored.focusonthefamily.com](http://hoperestored.focusonthefamily.com)

- Our intensive programs are held in a retreat setting and are designed to rebuild and restore marriages experiencing significant hurt.

**Love and Respect Ministries**

770 Kenmoor Avenue Southeast, Suite 101

Grand Rapids, MI 49546

616/949-9790

[loveandrespect.com](http://loveandrespect.com)

- This ministry offers materials, articles, and conferences designed to help those already married enrich their relationship, and prepare those considering marriage.

**PREPARE/ENRICH**

2660 Arthur Street

Roseville, MN 55113

800/331-1661

[prepare-enrich.com](http://prepare-enrich.com)

- This online relationship inventory and skill-building program is uniquely tailored to each couple.