



## Resource List: Premarital Materials (Dating or Engaged)

The resources listed below align with Focus on the Family's philosophy and mission. We trust you will find them helpful. If you would like to obtain any of these items, call us toll free at 1-800-A-FAMILY, or visit our online store at [store.focusonthefamily.com](http://store.focusonthefamily.com). (The information is regularly updated, but there is still the possibility that an item originally available from Focus on the Family might now be unavailable.) You may also be interested in the content posted on our website at [focusonthefamily.com](http://focusonthefamily.com).

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### Books

**101 Questions to Ask Before You Get Engaged** by H. Norman Wright (2004) • 9780736913942 •

Through a series of questions concerning spirituality, finances, families of origin, past relationships, and habits, Wright helps you seek God's guidance in learning about your potential spouse *before* you decide to get engaged.

**As Long As We Both Shall Live: Experience the Marriage You've Always Wanted** by Dr. Gary Smalley and Pastor Ted Cunningham (2009) • 9780800725808 •

This resource provides tools you'll need to establish a lasting life together. Smalley and Cunningham teach you how to understand each other's needs, express yourself honestly, and increase intimacy.

**Before You Get Engaged** by David Gudgel, Brent Gudgel, and Danielle Fitch (2007) • 9780849919183 •

David, son Brent, and Brent's girlfriend, Danielle, discuss twelve relational indicators indispensable to a healthy, lasting marriage. This book is designed to help daters know if engagement is truly the best next step in the relationship.

**Before You Live Together** by David Gudgel (2003) • 9780800725235 •

Using real-life examples, Gudgel presents a compelling, loving, and biblical response to the question of cohabitation, detailing why God's blueprint for marriage is the best.

**Before You Plan Your Wedding, Plan Your Marriage** by Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley (2008) • 9781416543541 •

Your wedding may be the most important day of your life, but it's only one day. Afterward come years of potential contentment or conflict, happiness or heartbreak. Learn to make wise marital choices and build a loving, life-long marriage.

**Before You Say I Do Devotional** by H. Norman Wright (2015) • 9780736961103 •

Filled with thoughtful questions, this journaling book features 60 devotions to help couples start off on the right foot and make Jesus the cornerstone of their lifelong bond.

**Boundaries in Dating** by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (2000) • 9780310200345 •

Setting healthy boundaries in dating will make the journey from singleness to marriage safer, more freeing, and more self-controlled. This book helps singles handle relationships in an honest and careful way, bringing joy rather than heartache.

**Boy Meets Girl** by Joshua Harris (2005) • 9781590521670 •

Harris presents real-life stories of courtship to encourage readers to keep God as the focal point of any relationship as they consider whether marriage may be part of their future.

**Countdown for Couples: Preparing for the Adventure of Marriage** by Dale and Susan Mathis (2008) • 9781589974852 •

Engaged couples can have stronger, more successful marriages if they participate in premarital counseling. *Countdown for Couples* delivers clear insight and tackles important questions for couples considering marriage.

**The Dating Manifesto** by Lisa Anderson (2015) • 9781434708878 •

Anderson shares from her own experiences and from biblical wisdom to offer a “drama-free plan for pursuing marriage with purpose.”

**Define the Relationship: A Candid Look at Breaking up, Making up, and Dating Well** by Jeramy and Jerusha Clark (2004) • 9781578565924 •

Every romantic relationship gets to the point where it needs to be defined. Learn to communicate your feelings and expectations in an honest, God-honoring way.

**Doing Things Right in Matters of the Heart** by John Ensor (2007) • 9781581348422 •

Challenging the cultural trend among singles to hook up, shack up, and break up, Ensor explores God’s design for biblical masculinity and femininity to help men and women pursue healthy relationships.

**Finding the Right One for You: Secrets to Recognizing Your Perfect Mate** by H. Norman Wright (2008) • 9780736921435 •

Wright helps people make choices leading to the kind of marriage they’ve always longed for and offers answers to questions singles ask: How can I know if I’m in love? Where do I find a lifelong partner? How do I recover from a broken relationship?

**Get Married: What Women Can Do to Help It Happen** by Candice Watters (2008) • 9780802458292 •

Sharing her personal story and offering a biblical perspective, Watters encourages single women to anticipate and prepare for a God-glorifying marriage.

**Love for a Lifetime Bible Study** by Dr. James Dobson (2015) • 9781430033011 •

Written especially for the engaged and newly married, this book highlights the fundamentals of a Christian marriage and reveals the keys to an enduring relationship.

**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 can provide a blueprint for a healthy, loving, lifelong relationship.

**Money Before Marriage: A Financial Workbook for Engaged Couples** by Larry Burkett (1996) • 9780802463890 •

This workbook offers principles from Scripture regarding communication in marriage, budgeting, spending habits, and spiritual issues.

**Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ’s Control** by Elisabeth Elliot (2013) • 9780800723132 •

This is the story of Jim and Elisabeth Elliot’s meeting, friendship, courtship, engagement, and marriage. Elisabeth offers an encouraging message of uncompromised obedience to God and a total surrender of all passions to His will.

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

This book explores important traits of a thriving marriage, including intimacy and managing conflict well.

**Ready to Wed Couple’s Workbook** • 2350000000318 •

**Ready to Wed DVD Kit** • 2350000000455 •

**Real Men Don’t Text: A New Approach to Dating** by Ruthie and Michael Dean (2013) • 9781414386676 •

The Deans share mishaps and success from their own relationship to offer other couples a healthy, godly approach to navigating love, sex, and dating.

**Reclaiming Intimacy: Overcoming the Consequences of Premarital Relationships** by Heather Jamison (2001) • 9780825429408 •

Jamison honestly discusses the hindrances to marital intimacy caused by premarital sex and explores ways to overcome them. She details the steps that brought her into a relationship of intimacy with her husband years after their marriage began.

**Right From the Start: A Premarital Guide for Couples** by David and Lisa Frisbe (2011) • 9780834126046 •

For couples serious about getting their marriage off to a good start and learning skills to keep it on track for life, this book offers real-life stories and advice. The authors help couples work through ideas, differences, and misunderstandings.

**The Ring Makes All the Difference: Hidden Consequences of Cohabitation and the Strong Benefits of Marriage**

by Glenn Stanton (2011) • 9780802402165 •

Does living together truly give people what they long for? Stanton offers a compelling, factual case that nearly every area of health and happiness is *increased* by marriage and *decreased* by cohabitation.

**The Sacred Search** by Gary Thomas (2012) • 9781434704894 •

Thomas suggests that if you don't know *why* to marry, you won't know *who* to marry. Here he offers a guide for building a relationship and marriage around a shared spiritual journey.

**Sacred Sex: Embracing Your Sexuality As God Designed It** by Tony Evans (2014) • 9780802411556 •

Evans takes a scriptural and scientific look at our God-given sexuality, the value of purity, and the importance of holding sex in a sacred light.

**Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts** by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott (2015) • 9780310346289 •

Helping engaged couples build a solid foundation for lifelong love, the authors' professional experience and personal insights provide practical tools to build a loving and lasting future.

**Starting Out Together: A Devotional for Dating or Engaged Couples** by H. Norman Wright (1996) • 9780764216565 •

Stay focused on God's will by spending time together and prayerfully working through important issues. This book contains two months' worth of devotionals filled with practical wisdom and sound biblical advice.

**Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married** by Gary Chapman (2010) • 9780802481832 •

Chapman shares practical tips and teaches engaged couples how to work together as a team. The discussion centers on communication and conflict resolution for topics common to newlyweds.

**When God Writes Your Love Story** by Eric and Leslie Ludy (2009) • 9781601421654 •

This is the story of the Ludys' experience—from the pain of one failed romance after another to trusting God to author their relationship. They emphasize seeking hope, joy, security, wholeness, and fulfillment in Christ.

**Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in a Post-Modern Society** by Glenn Stanton (1997) • 9781576830185 •

Drawing from 100 years of research, Stanton examines marriage in America today and gives readers solid reasons to believe in marriage in a postmodern culture that would have us think that marriage is old-fashioned, outdated, and irrelevant.

## Broadcasts & Downloads

**Answering Questions Single Adults Ask – I, II** (Lisa Anderson) • 9781624716706 •

Anderson, Director of Focus' Boundless ministry, provides hope and encouragement for singles in the 30+ crowd. She briefly shares her story of singleness and how she's learned to trust God in her circumstances. She addresses questions dealing with disappointment, loneliness, how to meet other godly singles, and how churches can better come alongside singles.

**Building a Strong Foundation for Your Marriage – I, II** (Dr. Gary Chapman) • 9781624711220 •

Newlyweds are often surprised that marriage is different from what they expected. They often are dismayed to learn they don't know each other as well as they thought. Chapman offers insights and practical advice for engaged couples.

**Cohabitation vs. Marriage: Why the Ring Matters** (Glenn Stanton) • 9781624718335 •

A family formation expert, Stanton discusses the trend of cohabitation and debunks the myth that unmarried couples should "test" marital compatibility by living together.

**Dating and Pursuing Marriage With Purpose – I, II** (Lisa Anderson) • 9781624719295 •

Anderson, Focus on the Family's Director of Young Adults and host of "The Boundless Show" podcast, shares from her book, *The Dating Manifesto*. She recounts her story and the lessons she wishes she'd learned in her 20s. She talks about how singles can date with purpose, and the importance of forming a community to help you "meet and marry." Anderson also discusses the pitfalls of online dating and the importance of the Church coming alongside singles.

**Dating Well: Wisdom for Single Adults – I, II** (Dr. Henry Cloud, Dr. John Townsend) • 9781624711879 •

Cloud and Townsend share tips for wise relationships—including only dating a believer, having a good support system of family and friends, setting physical boundaries, and being emotionally and spiritually healthy.

**Engaged Couples: Building a Solid Foundation for Marriage – I, II** (Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley) • 9781624712654 •

Sharing personal successes and mistakes, the Smalleys talk about the importance of covering the basics when preparing for marriage, such as communication, forgiveness, dealing with differences, and understanding each other's expectations.

**Examining My Past for a Better Future – I, II** (Dr. Louie Giglio) • 9781624716508 •

Giglio talks about the baggage all of us bring to relationships, especially marriage. He encourages you to stop working from past examples and to embrace new patterns learned from a relationship with God.

**Finding Your Lifelong Love** (Pastor Dan Chun, Lisa Anderson) • 9781624718618 •

Chun, author of *How to Pick a Spouse*, and Anderson, director of Focus' Boundless singles' ministry, discuss how to intentionally search for a godly spouse. They talk about seven qualities singles should look for in a potential mate and emphasize the importance of a supportive church community.

**A Fresh Look at Dating – I, II** (Gary Thomas) • 9781624714924 •

Thomas explores the difference between a "soul" mate and a "sole" mate, encouraging singles to live out Matthew 6:33 and "seek first the kingdom of God." He talks about the need to focus on a person's character rather than romantic attraction.

**God's Blueprint for a Healthy Marriage – I, II** (Dr. Timothy and Mrs. Kathy Keller) • 9781624710759 •

Keller and his wife 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.

**I, Isaac, Take You, Rebekah – I, II** (Dr. Ravi Zacharias) • 9781624713019 •

Zacharias uses the story of Isaac and Rebekah from Genesis 24 to illustrate biblical principles in the process of selecting a mate. He challenges young adults to be people of prayer and to have the input of others in the selection process.

**The Path of Endurance** (Elisabeth Elliot) • 9781624719189 •

In a pre-recorded message given to a student convention, Elisabeth describes her courtship with Jim, their willingness to surrender their futures to God, their marriage five-and-a-half years later, their call to the mission field, and Jim's death in Ecuador in 1956. She stresses that the Christian life is a path of endurance, and she urges listeners to submit their longings to God and wait for His best, reserving intimacy for marriage.

**Practical Advice for Those Getting Ready to Wed – I, II** (Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley) • 9781624718861 •

The Smalleys recommend premarital counseling, which is critical to building a healthy, godly marriage. They also address issues of commitment, leaving and cleaving, honoring your spouse, communication, managing conflict well, and more.

**The Search for a Godly Spouse – I, II** (Reverend Alistair Begg) • 9781683320401 •

Begg shares how to be prepared for the privileges and responsibilities associated with dating and marriage, and he offers specific suggestions to men and women about what to look for in a spouse.

**Set the Date: Embracing Young Love – I, II** (Pastor Ted Cunningham) • 9781624711435 •

Discussing the necessary *and* unnecessary reasons to delay marriage, Cunningham challenges the idea that marriage should only happen once you have an education, a career, and a plan.

**Shattering Marital Myths and Expectations** (Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott) • 9781624713149 •

In a discussion based on their book *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*, the Parrotts examine common misconceptions about marriage and offer practical solutions for moving beyond unfulfilled expectations to building a stronger marriage.

**Solomon on Romance – I, II** (Rev. Tommy Nelson) • 9781624718496 •

Nelson draws on the Song of Solomon's imagery to convey principles about dating and courtship. He also discusses the signs of healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships and lists several things that need to occur as a couple moves toward marriage.

**Understanding God's Sacred Design for Sex** (Dr. Tony Evans) • 9781624716546 •

Evans explains God's design for sex within marriage and addresses the cultural distortion of that plan. He also lifts up the sacredness of physical intimacy between a husband and wife, referencing God's Word as our guide.

**The Value of Marrying Young** (Dr. Albert Mohler) • 9781683320845 •

Mohler explains how our culture devalues marriage and why young people delay matrimony. He encourages Christians to avoid this societal trend by marrying young and pursuing adulthood as a couple.



**Define the Relationship Assessment** (Boundless.org download)

The DTR can provide perspective and help couples learn to build and enjoy the connection and clarity that can come from a healthy relationship.

**Guides to Marrying Well** (Boundless.org downloads)

The *Girl's Guide to Marrying Well* and the *Guy's Guide to Marrying Well* help men and women understand, embrace, and approach God's design for marriage.

## Curriculum

### **Ready to Wed™ Kit: Preparing Couples for a Marriage They'll Love** (Focus on the Family, 2015) • 2350000000455 •

Encourage your pastor or mentors to journey through this 10-session series with you and other engaged couples. Covering finances, in-laws, intimacy, chores, and more, it includes DVDs, a leader's guide, two copies of the couple's workbook, a copy of Dr. Greg and Erin Smalley's book *Ready to Wed*, and promotional materials for church launches.

### **Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts** (Zondervan, 2006) • 9780310875734 •

Providing a firm foundation for couples stepping into an unfamiliar world, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott 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 Websites, Q&As, and Resource Lists

### **Boundless**

- [boundless.org](http://boundless.org)

This site offers articles, a [podcast](#), and more on topics related to singleness, dating, and marriage.

### **Preparing for Marriage**

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

This area of our website houses articles, resources, and referrals for topics related to dating, courtship, preparing for marriage, and more.

### **Ready to Wed**

- [focusonthefamily.com/marriage/promos/ready-to-wed](http://focusonthefamily.com/marriage/promos/ready-to-wed)

Take four key steps to build a marriage that will last a lifetime.

### **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.

**Christian Growth for Adults** • RL022 •

**The Early Years of Marriage** • RL069 •

**Marriage Materials** • RL016 •

**Materials for Men** • RL024 •

**Materials for Women** • RL011 •

## Referrals

### **PREPARE/ENRICH**

Life Innovations  
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.