

40 Premarital Counseling Questions for Building a Strong Marriage

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Purpose

Marriage is not only about planning a wedding. It is about preparing for a life together. These questions are designed to help engaged couples slow down, talk honestly, understand each other more deeply, and begin building habits that support a healthy, lasting marriage.

Couples may answer these questions together, write individual responses first, or discuss a few questions at a time with a counselor, pastor, mentor, or premarital facilitator.

Foundation and Expectations

1. What does marriage mean to each of us?

Discuss what marriage represents emotionally, spiritually, legally, and relationally. Are you entering marriage with similar expectations, or do you define commitment differently?

2. Why do we want to get married now?

Talk about timing, readiness, motivation, and whether marriage feels like a thoughtful next step rather than pressure, convenience, or expectation.

3. What do we believe makes a marriage strong?

Identify the qualities you believe are essential, such as trust, communication, forgiveness, friendship, faith, commitment, shared values, and emotional safety.

4. What fears or concerns do we have about marriage?

This question creates space for honesty. Naming fears before marriage can help couples address them with tenderness rather than letting them grow in silence.

5. What kind of marriage do we hope to build?

Describe the emotional tone of your future home. Do you want it to feel peaceful, joyful, structured, adventurous, faith-centered, hospitable, private, or something else?

Communication and Conflict

6. How do we each communicate when we are upset?

Talk about whether you withdraw, pursue, become defensive, get quiet, become intense, cry, shut down, or try to fix things quickly.

7. What helps each of us feel heard during difficult conversations?

Identify what works best: eye contact, calm tone, reflective listening, time to think, physical closeness, written communication, or reassurance.

8. What topics are hardest for us to talk about?

Discuss areas that feel sensitive, such as money, sex, family, past wounds, faith, parenting, work, or emotional needs.

9. How will we handle conflict when we disagree strongly?

Create a plan for how you will argue respectfully, take breaks, avoid hurtful words, and return to the conversation.

10. What does a sincere apology look like to each of us?

Talk about whether you need words, changed behavior, affection, time, accountability, or repair before trust feels restored.

11. How do we forgive without pretending hurt did not happen?

Discuss the difference between forgiveness, reconciliation, trust, and boundaries.

12. What are our warning signs that a conversation is becoming unhealthy?

Identify signs such as raised voices, sarcasm, criticism, defensiveness, stonewalling, contempt, blaming, or bringing up unrelated past issues.

Emotional Connection and Friendship

13. What helps each of us feel emotionally close?

Discuss daily connection, meaningful conversation, affection, quality time, encouragement, prayer, shared activities, or quiet presence.

14. How can we continue learning each other after marriage?

Marriage requires ongoing curiosity. Talk about how you will keep asking questions, noticing changes, and staying emotionally engaged.

15. What makes each of us feel loved and valued?

Be specific. Name words, actions, routines, gestures, and forms of affection that communicate love clearly.

16. What do we enjoy doing together that strengthens our friendship?

Identify hobbies, traditions, dates, service opportunities, travel, shared meals, walks, games, or conversations that help you enjoy one another.

17. How will we protect regular time for connection?

Talk about date nights, daily check-ins, technology boundaries, bedtime routines, meals together, or weekly marriage conversations.

18. How do we want to handle emotional distance when it happens?

Discuss how you will recognize disconnection and what each person can do to gently move back toward the other.

Intimacy, Affection, and Sexual Expectations

19. What does intimacy mean beyond sex?

Talk about emotional closeness, vulnerability, trust, affection, friendship, spiritual connection, and feeling safe with one another.

20. How do we understand the role of sex in marriage?

Discuss expectations, hopes, fears, frequency, affection, communication, and how to talk about sexual needs respectfully.

21. How will we communicate about sexual concerns or differences?

Create a safe way to discuss desire, discomfort, past experiences, health concerns, expectations, and boundaries without shame or pressure.

22. How do we show affection in everyday life?

Talk about holding hands, hugs, kisses, sitting close, kind words, small gestures, and nonsexual touch.

23. How will we avoid using affection or sex as punishment, control, or manipulation?

Discuss how to handle hurt or disconnection without withholding love in a way that damages emotional safety.

Money, Work, and Responsibilities

24. What did we learn about money growing up?

Discuss family patterns around saving, spending, debt, generosity, budgeting, financial stress, and financial secrecy.

25. How will we make financial decisions together?

Talk about budgets, joint accounts, separate accounts, spending limits, debt repayment, savings goals, and who handles bills.

26. What financial goals do we have for the first year of marriage?

Name short-term goals such as building an emergency fund, paying down debt, saving for a home, giving, travel, or education.

27. How will we divide household responsibilities?

Discuss chores, meals, laundry, cleaning, errands, repairs, administration, and emotional labor. Focus on fairness, not scorekeeping.

28. How will career decisions affect our marriage?

Talk about schedules, job stress, relocation, work-life balance, career ambitions, education, and how you will support each other.

Family, Children, and Home Life

29. What boundaries do we need with extended family?

Discuss visits, holidays, advice, privacy, finances, emergencies, loyalty, and how you will protect the marriage relationship.

30. How will we handle holidays and traditions?

Talk about where you will go, what traditions matter, how you will alternate families, and what new traditions you want to create.

31. Do we want children, and what are our hopes about parenting?

Discuss timing, number of children, fertility concerns, adoption, parenting values, discipline, education, faith, and family roles.

32. What parenting patterns from our families do we want to repeat or change?

Talk honestly about what you appreciated growing up and what you hope to do differently.

33. What do we want our home to feel like?

Describe the emotional and spiritual climate you want to create. Peaceful, structured, playful, faith-centered, welcoming, calm, flexible, or disciplined.

Faith, Values, and Shared Meaning

34. What role will faith or spirituality have in our marriage?

Discuss worship, prayer, church involvement, spiritual leadership, differences in belief, doubts, and how you will respect each other's convictions.

35. What values do we want to guide our decisions?

Identify core values such as honesty, faithfulness, generosity, hospitality, service, humility, family, stewardship, justice, or perseverance.

36. How will we make important decisions together?

Talk about prayer, discussion, wise counsel, research, waiting, compromise, and how to handle decisions when you do not agree.

37. What does commitment mean when marriage becomes difficult?

Discuss how you understand covenant, perseverance, counseling, repair, accountability, and choosing the marriage during hard seasons.

Stress, Growth, and the Future

38. How does each of us respond to stress, grief, disappointment, or failure?

Talk about coping patterns, emotional needs, support systems, unhealthy habits, and how your spouse can help without trying to control or fix everything.

39. What dreams do we each carry for the next five to ten years?

Discuss personal dreams, shared dreams, career goals, family goals, ministry goals, financial goals, travel, education, and lifestyle hopes.

40. How will we keep growing as a couple after the wedding?

Create a plan for ongoing growth through counseling, mentoring, retreats, books, date nights, faith practices, check-ins, and honest conversations.

Closing Reflection for Couples

A strong marriage is not built by avoiding hard conversations. It is built by learning how to have them with love, humility, honesty, and respect. These questions are not meant to create fear. They are meant to create clarity. The goal is not for couples to agree on everything. The goal is for couples to understand each other deeply and learn how to walk together wisely.