

BEFORE WE SAY, *"I do"*

WHAT EVERY COUPLE SHOULD
KNOW BEFORE MARRIAGE

metanoya

INTRODUCTION

If you are taking this course, chances are you are preparing for one of the most exciting decisions you will ever make: marriage. And I want you to know from the beginning: our goal is not simply to help you plan a great wedding. **We want to help you build a great marriage.**

A wedding lasts a day. A marriage is meant to last a lifetime.

Over these sessions, we're going to have some honest conversations about the things that really matter: your relationship with God, communication, conflict, your past, trust, money, intimacy, family, and the covenant you are preparing to make with one another. Some conversations will be fun. Others may challenge you. But don't be afraid of the difficult conversations. It's better to talk about these things now than to be surprised by them later.

You don't need to come into marriage having everything figured out. There is no perfect couple, and there is no perfect marriage. What you do need is a willingness to grow, to be honest, to listen, to forgive, and most importantly, to keep Jesus at the center of your relationship.

My prayer is that you won't simply finish this course knowing more about marriage. I pray that you'll finish it knowing each other better, understanding yourselves better, and becoming more prepared for the covenant you're about to enter. **Marriage is one of God's greatest gifts. Don't just prepare for the wedding. Prepare for the life you're going to build together.**

I'm excited for you, I'm praying for you, and I'm honored that we get to be part of this season with you.

Anticipating Great Things,



Pastor Jubal García

Lead Pastor | Metanoya Church

SESSION 1: BEFORE YOU MARRY, YOU MUST BE DISCIPLED.

Key Truth:

Before you look for the right person, let God form you into the right person.

Key Scriptures:

- **Matthew 7:24–27**
- **Matthew 16:24**
- **Galatians 5:22–23**
- **Philippians 2:3–5**
- **Proverbs 4:23**

INTRODUCTION

Before we talk about marriage, communication, conflict, money, sex, or anything else in this course, we need to start with **you**. Because everybody wants to talk about finding the right person. “How do I know they're the one?” “Are we compatible?” “Are they right for me?”

Those are important questions. But there's another question that may be even more important: “Am I becoming the kind of person who is ready for marriage?” Because you can find an incredible person and still build an unhealthy relationship if you aren't spiritually and emotionally mature enough to love them well.

A lot of people want connection without maturity. They want love without wisdom. They want something serious while still allowing their emotions to control their decisions. They spend enormous amounts of time thinking about who they want to marry and very little time thinking about who they will be when they get married.

So we're going to start this course somewhere different. Before we talk about who you're marrying, we're going to talk about who you're becoming. Because who you are will eventually affect everything you build with someone else.

1. MARRIAGE DOESN'T _____.

You prepare for marriage by allowing Jesus to work on you.

2. RELATIONSHIPS _____ YOU.

God doesn't reveal things in us just to condemn us. He reveals them so He can change us.

**3. IF _____ ISN'T _____ YOU,
SOMETHING ELSE WILL.**

Because if Jesus isn't leading you, eventually something else will.

4. YOU CANNOT ASK YOUR _____ TO DO WHAT
ONLY _____ CAN DO.

"Jesus is forming me, and I want to learn how to love you the
way He has called me to love you."

5. _____ TEACHES YOU HOW TO _____.

You're not just becoming a better Christian. You're becoming a
better person to marry.

6. FOCUS ON _____.

**Marriage doesn't eliminate selfishness. Marriage exposes it.
And discipleship teaches us how to put it to death.**

**7. BUILD YOUR LIFE ON _____ BEFORE YOU
BUILD A _____.**

You need Jesus. That's where marriage begins.

CONCLUSION

Before we talk about becoming husband and wife, we have to talk about becoming disciples of Jesus. Because the goal of this course isn't simply to help you find out whether you've chosen the right person. It's also to help you ask: "Am I becoming the right kind of person?"

You don't have to be perfect before you get married. Nobody is. But you should be growing. You should be teachable. You should be allowing

Jesus to confront things in you. You should be learning how to forgive. How to communicate. How to serve. How to control your emotions. How to put somebody else before yourself.

Because Jesus doesn't just want to give you somebody to love. He wants to form you into somebody who knows how to love. And that's where we will begin.

COUPLE DISCUSSION

The teacher should help the couple focus primarily on **themselves**, not use these questions to point out what the other person needs to change.

- 1. What do you believe God is forming or changing in you during this season of your life?**
- 2. What has our relationship revealed about you: both healthy qualities and areas where you still need to grow?**
- 3. When you make relationship decisions, what tends to lead you most: Jesus and biblical wisdom, emotions, fear, attraction, insecurity, other people's opinions, or something else?**
- 4. Are there any needs you sometimes expect me to meet that really need to be rooted first in your relationship with God?**
- 5. If you could become stronger in one area before our wedding: patience, communication, forgiveness, self-control, humility, security, faithfulness, or something else; which would you choose and why?**

HOMEWORK

Complete the personal sections individually. Then come together and discuss what you discovered.

1. TAKE A PERSONAL INVENTORY.

Don't evaluate your fiancé. Evaluate yourself.
Rate yourself honestly from **1-5**.

1 = I really need growth | 5 = This is becoming a strength

- Patience: _____
- Kindness: _____
- Self-control: _____
- Forgiveness: _____
- Communication: _____
- Humility: _____
- Faithfulness: _____
- Ability to receive correction: _____
- Emotional maturity: _____
- Relationship with Jesus: _____

Now answer:

WHAT ARE MY TWO STRONGEST AREAS?

I. _____

II. _____

WHAT ARE THE TWO AREAS WHERE I MOST NEED TO GROW?

I. _____

II. _____

2. ASK YOURSELF THE HARD QUESTION.

Complete these sentences privately.

- **When I don't get my way, I usually**_____

- **When I feel hurt, I usually**_____

- **When someone corrects me, I usually**_____

- **When I feel insecure in our relationship, I usually**_____

- **One unhealthy pattern I don't want to carry into our marriage is** _____

Then share your answers with each other. The person listening should not correct, defend, or explain. Just listen.

3. OPEN YOUR BIBLES TOGETHER.

Read Galatians 5:22–23. Write down the qualities the Holy Spirit wants to produce in your life:

Now each person answer:

Which of these qualities does our future marriage need God to develop more deeply in me?

Now read Philippians 2:3–5. Answer together:

What would it practically look like for us to put this passage into practice in our marriage?

Finally, read Matthew 7:24–27. Discuss:

What would it look like practically for us to build our marriage on Jesus rather than simply on our feelings for each other?

4. PRACTICE SELFLESS LOVE.

Each person intentionally do **one thing this week** that puts the other person's needs ahead of your own. Don't announce it beforehand. Don't expect anything in return. Simply serve.

☐ Completed

What did I do?

Was serving easy or difficult for me? Why?

What did this reveal about me?

5. **SPEND TIME WITH JESUS INDIVIDUALLY.**

Before your next session, each person should spend at least **three intentional times alone with God.**

☐ Time 1

☐ Time 2

☐ Time 3

During each time: Read Scripture. Pray. Ask God to show you where He wants you to grow. Don't spend the time praying: "God, change my fiancé." Pray: "God, change me."

After your three times with God, answer:

What do I believe God is showing me about myself?

6. **PRAY TOGETHER.**

Spend at least 10 minutes praying together before your next session. Each person should pray for their own growth first and then pray for the person they are preparing to marry.

Ask God to: Form your character. Strengthen your relationship with Jesus. Expose unhealthy patterns. Teach you how to love selflessly. Prepare you for the covenant of marriage.

THIS WEEK'S COMMITMENT

Each person complete:

**“Before I ask God to change my fiancé, I am asking Him to
change _____ in me.”**

Then complete this together:

**“One way we are going to intentionally put Jesus at the center of
our relationship is _____.”**