



Rules of Engagement

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Rules of Engagement

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Rules of Engagement

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BACKGROUND

The Rules of Engagement program has been developed by a team of experts in Clinical Psychology from a Biblical worldview. In addition to theological insights and ancient Jewish customs, instructional concepts are based on empirical research across diverse academic disciplines. The strategies presented in this program are supported by clinical research and have been embraced by Christian communities around the world.

GETTING STARTED

The Rules of Engagement program is intended for completion by Christian couples who are looking to get married. Research suggests that learning is best consolidated through 'talking'. As such, after watching video sessions together, it's recommended you also talk through and complete relevant workbook activities together. Feel free to pause the video at any time, to reflect on or discuss key points. Activity worksheets provide a summary of key points and serve to reinforce lessons on marriage empowerment.

DISCLAIMER

Any information, assessment or activity presented in the Rules of Engagement program is intended for educational purposes only. Content is provided in good faith as to its accuracy and reflects the research, observations, opinions, views and understanding of the authors at one point in time. In recognising contemporary variance in beliefs, any scriptural quote, paraphrase, discussion or interpretation of The Holy Bible is presented from a prevailing historical conservative perspective (as it has been understood for thousands of years). The educational material in this program has been designed to serve and empower adult Christian couples who are considering marriage, from a traditional biblical worldview. The information herein is in no way intended to be intolerant, discriminatory or prejudiced against any other person or couple that falls outside of the specified intended audience. Any person of any faith (including faith in non-deity-based materialism) who is involved in any kind of relationship (inside or outside of traditional marriage), who chooses to participate in this program of their own free will, should be advised that the information presented herein, may at times, be at odds with their own personal beliefs. Therefore, your participation in this program is by your own choice, acknowledging and understanding the possible risk of confusion, liberation or offense. Furthermore, at no point should this information be taken diagnostically or as clinical therapy. For professional advice, please consult your medical or mental health professional. By participating in this program, as defined as reading any workbook materials or watching any video content, you hereby agree to indemnify and hold the author(s), owner(s) and its subsidiaries, affiliates, officers, directors, agents, co-branders, partners and employees, as the case may be, harmless from and against any claim or demand, including without limitation, reasonable lawyer's fees and costs, made by any third party due to or arising out of the content of this Rules of Engagement program.

The Big Picture

ACTIVITY SHEET



In the Rules of Engagement program, we'll examine:

- what a marriage 'covenant' is and how it differs from a 'contract'
- how compatible your values are
- individual expectations of marriage (roles and responsibilities)
- ways to resolve conflict and come into alignment
- traps and pitfalls typical of the first few years of marriage
- effective solutions and rescue strategies
- God's formula for a healthy marriage



PROGRAM DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

The Rules of Engagement program is designed to help you:

- (a)** consider factors that contribute to a flourishing marriage
- (b)** discover areas of potential strength and growth as a couple
- (c)** learn skills and develop strategies to trouble shoot before trouble starts

What do you value and expect?

Each person comes into relationship with their own pre-established values and expectations. Couples may find that they can agree on anything or that they differ greatly on almost everything. Differences in values and expectations may relate to what you perceive your roles and responsibilities to be, or the way they view the world and derive meaning from it.

For two people to live in harmony and maintain unity, a certain degree of alignment will be required – especially when making key decisions. It’s important, therefore, to know where each of you stand on values, roles, responsibilities, and worldviews. The more compatible your values, the more likely you will have unity and be able to agree about everything from your finances and family, to your faith journey and future priorities.



Consider the following scenarios and choose the response that lines up best with your own personally held core values. Where you find it difficult to decide (e.g., you agree with more than one answer or don’t entirely agree with any of the options), simply choose the option that’s most closely aligned with your beliefs and values.



NOTE: HONESTY REQUIRED

The following questions are designed to help you discover more about each other’s personally held beliefs and core values. There are no right or wrong answers per se. Rather, the goal of this exercise is to discover where you have similar ideals and where you have differences. Don’t answer to impress one another, conform to perceived expectations, or copy one another’s answers (in an effort to contrive unity). Simply answer as honestly as you can.

	HER ✓	HIM ✓
1. What does the term wedding vow mean to you?		
A: A declaration and celebration of love and friendship that changes a relationship’s status from ‘casual’ to ‘committed’.		
B: An agreement to love and respect one another, so long as each person remains faithful, loyal and lovable.		
C: A solemn promise before God and witnesses to remain faithfully married for life - with no conditions attached.		
2. When it comes to personal development and self-improvement...		
A: It’s important to continue growing in grace and knowledge, and to ensure ongoing development of individual gifts, skills and talents.		
B: I am of the view that mutual growth and maturity is more important than the independent development of gifts, skills and talents.		
C: I believe we should accept each other the way we are. Once married the need for personal growth and development is not so important.		

3. When stressed...

A: Everyone gets upset and loses their temper from time to time. It's only normal to blow off a little steam. It releases tension.

B: It's important to maintain emotional control and composure. Tantrums are not only juvenile, they can be a form of abuse.

C: Emotional management is a primary responsibility for our relationship. We may not always get it right, but maturity is expected.

4. It is my expectation that...

A: We will start a family (have or adopt children) early on in our marriage - likely within the first few years.

B: We will start a family (have or adopt children) once our marriage, careers and financial foundations have been well established.

C: It is most unlikely that we will start a family. Having or adopting children is not on the cards for us. I have no interest in this area.

5. The greatest strength in our relationship is that...

A: We are compatible. We have many interests in common. When it comes to career or hobby's, we're passionate about the same things.

B: We have great chemistry. Even though we're very different and have little in common, as the saying goes, "opposites attract".

C: Our faith unites us. We are both passionate about the things of God. If our individual relationship with God is strong, we are strong.

6. If my career (business/military) requires me to move to another city/state/country...

A: I would expect my future spouse to be supportive of such a move and follow me and my career/deployment wherever it may lead.

B: I would just as soon quit or change jobs than require my family to be uprooted. Family stability is more important than financial stability.

C: I would expect my future spouse to remain open to whatever God may have in store for us. Following the call of God is most important.

7. When it comes to in-laws (in particular, parents of future spouse) ...

A: I would be open to their input and influence in our family and financial decisions, so long as there are healthy boundaries in place.

B: I am not very open to their input or influence on what we do and how we do it, especially as it relates to our family or finances.

C: I expect their input and influence in our family and financial affairs will be vital for our ongoing success.

8. As a Christian couple, I expect we will...

A: Be planted in a local church, where we will commit to tithing (10% minimum) and were possible, serve in whatever way God leads.		
B: Explore the option of church attendance, and should we find a church that suits us well, we'd likely consider tithing and serving.		
C: Encourage one another in our faith, serve others and live generously (giving to social or humanitarian causes when moved).		

9. In the first few years of married life, I expect we will...

A: Live life to the full while still young and free (e.g., socialising, travelling, having adventures) all before settling down (career/family).		
B: Focus on our carers, making/saving money to purchase a home or make investments, to build a financial foundation (before kids arrive).		
C: Start a family (early on), so that when the kids leave home, we'll still be young and energetic enough to have adventures (later on).		

10. It's my expectation that after getting married...

A: Each of us will remain committed to looking after our health and fitness, staying physically attractive for one another.		
B: There'll be no real requirement to look after fitness and physique, because once married, there's no longer a need to "impress to win over".		
C: As we have kids and age, maintaining fitness/physique will become untenable, so we'll learn to find other characteristics attractive.		

11. When it comes to politics...

A: I believe in limited government, freedom of speech, conservative economic policies, low taxes, individual responsibility and Godly values.		
B: I believe the government should have progressive values, take care of people's needs, legislate political correctness and equality for all.		
C: I have no interest in politics. I have no idea about politics. I couldn't care less about who is in government or what they are doing.		

12. My view of close friendships with the opposite sex is that...

A: There's no problem with it so long as the friendship is pre-existing and remains non-sexual. One-on-one time isn't a big deal.		
B: It's a huge risk factor for possible indiscretions. As the saying goes, 'If you're trying to give up candy, stay out of the candy store'.		
C: There's no problem with it so long as transparent healthy boundaries are in place (e.g., avoiding 'confiding', one-on-one time).		

13. My expectations of sexual intimacy after marriage is that...

A: We will be intimate with each other at least on a monthly basis.		
B: We will be intimate with each other at least on a weekly basis.		
C: We will be intimate with each other at least on a daily basis.		

14. Should we ever have children, I would like...

A: To enjoy a great friendship with my kids, being a relaxed easy-going parent who isn't so strict and ridged, but more friendly and fun.		
B: To train my kids to be the best that they can be - who are self-controlled, motivated, confident and respectful towards their elders.		
C: To raise high achievers who are dedicated to succeeding in academics, sport and/or music, with a strong standard of discipline.		

15. The best way to enhance our relationship after marriage would be to...

A: Have a regular date night - whether dressing up and going out to dinner or going on fun adventures (picnics in exotic locations).		
B: Do things together that are of common interest (e.g., watching movies, playing sport, serving in church, music appreciation).		
C: Have small daily rituals (e.g., mealtimes, walking together, kissing/cuddling, coffee connections, praying with/for each other).		

16. If we were to ever start a family one day, I would expect...

A: We would take a few weeks off for the birth, but shortly thereafter, return to work - continuing to pursue our respective careers/business.		
B: Career/business interests would be set aside, and wife/mum would take extended leave (months to years) to care for the child.		
C: Career/business interests would be set aside, and husband/dad would take extended leave (months to years) to care for the child.		

17. The best way to deal with tension or conflict in our relationship is to...

A: Give each other space. Let the dust settle, forget the incident, dismiss hard feelings, re-group and enjoy each other's company.		
B: Discuss the issue until it's resolved. Don't take no for an answer. If it takes 1 minute, 1 hour, or 1 whole night, keep at it until you both agree.		
C: Stay calm and listen to each other's perspective (even if you disagree). How you talk is more important than what you talk about.		

18. The core values that best describe me include...

A: Honour, Integrity and Loyalty.		
B: Generosity, Hospitality and Kindness.		
C: Fairness, Equality and Justice.		

19. Personally, I am fuelled in my relationship by....

A: Kind words of encouragement, support and edification.		
B: Being cared for, practically supported, looked after and served.		
C: Being indulged/spoiled by generous deeds, activities and gifts.		

20. The times I feel most close and connected in my relationship is when...

A: There is physical intimacy and affection.		
B: There is emotional intimacy and friendship.		
C: There is deep and sustaining spiritual intimacy.		

21. The times I feel most distant and disconnected in my relationship is when...

A: There's conflict or communication breakdown.		
B: There's emotional volatility and moodiness.		
C: There's a display of immature, selfish or inconsiderate actions.		

22. When it comes to offense, I believe...

A: I have a right not to be offended (whether by words or actions). Being offensive may be considered relationship abuse or betrayal.		
B: Each of us are responsible for dealing with our own offense, taking our hurt to God - being quick to forgive and extending grace.		
C: Our words or actions may at times be offensive, but each of us are responsible for not taking offence (not getting offended by them).		

23. To me, one of the main reasons getting marriage is important is that we can...

A: Start a family (a stable marriage is the healthiest environment for children to grow up in, and family is the bedrock of society).		
B: Glorify God and magnify His love (our love for each other should be an example to others as a representation of God's love for us).		
C: Avoid being lonely (especially as we grow older). A healthy marriage will provide companionship for us both - for years to come.		

24. When it comes to setting future goals, I believe it's important that...

A: We set our own unique personal goals (whether pursuing individual interests, careers, fitness and physique, hobbies or faith/ministry).		
B: We set collective goals that we mutually agree on (whether it relates to family, finance, health and fitness, hobbies or faith/ministry).		
C: We encourage each other in our individual objectives (hobbies, career) but also establish goals together (family, finance, fitness, faith).		

25. When it comes to home-work roles and responsibilities, I believe...

A: Husbands should be the chief money-maker (provision of finance), and wives should be the chief homemaker (provision of nurture).		
B: Husbands and wives should be equally responsible for generating finances and managing the household (with no gender stereotyping).		
C: Husbands and wives are free to peruse career and/or family responsibilities - pursuing whatever role works best for their family.		



Compare to care, not to compete.

As you look at the answers you've each respectively chosen (as best reflecting your personally held beliefs and values), you may find in some areas you're on the same page, whereas in other areas, you're not even in the same book. It's okay to have differences, that's what makes you unique. If you were exactly the same, you would be marrying yourself. However, the closer you are aligned on important themes, the easier it will be for you to make important decisions in your marriage.




Choose one of your peak periods of closeness and identify one memory from that time:

Q: List the top 3 ideals, beliefs or values you are most closely aligned and united on:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q: List the top 3 ideals, beliefs or values you disagree on or are most divided over:

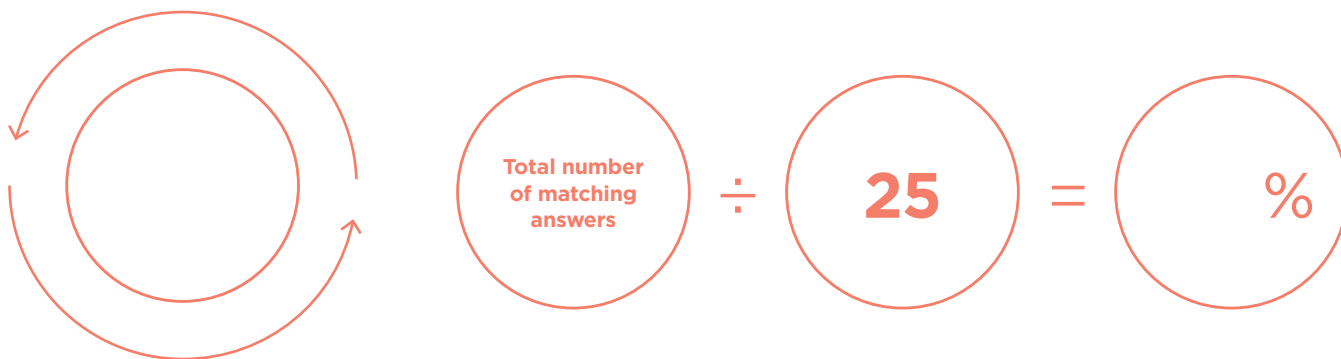
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



**CAN TWO PEOPLE
WALK TOGETHER
WITHOUT AGREEING
ON THE DIRECTION?
AMOS 3:3 (NLT)**

How in sync are you?

When it comes to your ideals and expectations of marriage, how aligned are you on perceived roles, responsibilities, worldviews and shared values? From the list of questions, add up the number of times your answers matched. Divide this number by 25. This will give you a snapshot of how in sync you are.



1. What areas of difference can we learn to appreciate about each other?

2. What are the areas of alignment that we can capitalise on?

3. What areas of disagreement might we need to resolve before getting married?



NOTE: MATURITY REQUIRED

Where there are VAST differences, this is not the time to judge, belittle, persuade or change each other's mind. Rather, seek to understand each other's perspective, exploring how this ideal, believe or value may have originated. Be respectful, inquisitive and considerate in your discussions. As you continue through the Rules of Engagement, this program will endeavour to help you to effectively manage expectations and resolve differences.

**IT'S COMMON FOR
COUPLES TO GET
SO CAUGHT UP IN
PLANNING THEIR
WEDDING DAY THAT
THEY FORGET TO
PREPARE FOR THEIR
ACTUAL MARRIED LIFE!**

**IN THE SAME WAY IT
TAKES PREPARATION
AND PLANNING TO
MAKE YOUR WEDDING
DAY RUN SMOOTHLY,
IT ALSO TAKES
PREPARATION AND
PLANNING TO**

**make your
marriage run
smoothly.**



DISCUSSION POINTS

Q: What is it about this person sitting next to you that attracts and really excites you? Communicate your answers to each other with both laughter and sincerity.

Let me tell you what I love about your:

Physical appearance

Personality and character

Strengths

Faith and relationship with God

Q: What is it about his/her vision for the future that entices you to want to be a part of it?
