

## AND TWO SHALL BECOME ONE

This unique worksheet is designed as a guide for discussion. It has been in continual revision since 1998. Whether you are pursuing this process for premarital counseling or a marriage 'tune-up,' this exercise will help identify any pressing issues that may interfere with marriage as God intended.

### Worksheet Directions

1. Print two copies. Each of you are to use a separate worksheet and to *write down your answers (in ink) prior to discussing them with each other*. This avoids "fibbing" and telling your partner what they want to hear. Be clear and honest with your answers. Sensitive issues may be discussed privately with me before sharing them (how or if) with your partner. I expect answers consistent with the space available. No one word answers! Not all questions are applicable to every person.
2. After each of you have privately completed your worksheet, seal your own worksheet in an envelope. Put both sealed envelopes in a larger envelope and mail or hand it to me. I will confidentially evaluate your responses and return the worksheets to you during our meeting(s) together. If you do not wish to continue this process, simply, keep the worksheets.
3. In our time together we will attempt to discover unrealistic expectations, oppositional worldviews and personality issues that may lead to disillusionment. You will also have the opportunity to express, discuss and modify your expectations in the presence of a referee (me). Not all 'red flags' are major problems but they will be identified and discussed. This will also be a time for us to review your communication skills and to identify specific behaviors that block loving communication.
4. After our time together you will keep your worksheets. They will be visible reminders of your understanding of each other's intent and mutual agreements for the difficult times ahead.

### Personal Note

If you are not a professing Christian, relax, you fall into the great majority of people I counsel. I will give you the same love and care (and honesty) I reserve for everybody.

Grace and peace to you,

*Chaplain Rob Sugg*

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date: (if you have one) \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation: (if you have one) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 1: Your Background and Expectations**

1. Discuss your values & worldview: What “code” of ethics do you live by?

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2. In a morality debate (right & wrong, good & bad), what authority do you appeal to?” e.g., Double-Blind Studies, Scripture, Parents, Feelings, Dr. Laura, Dr. Phil, Oprah?

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3. What are your family’s basic unwritten “rules?” Your mother’s side? & Your father’s side?

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4. Why do you want to be married? What does marriage give you that singleness doesn’t?

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5. What are your expectations for premarital counseling? (I’ll know if you are fibbing!)

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6. What does your “spiritual life” look like? (Where do you find meaning?) What is the purpose of life, how would you like to live it and what would you consider a “good death?”

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7. In what Faith Tradition will you (do you) raise your children?

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8. As parents, how will you provide a united religious or ethical example to your children?

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**9. Previously Married:** *I recognize that there are times when divorce is necessary but in most cases, one or both parties divorce due to selfishness and immaturity. Neither seems to get better without counseling.*

Attach at least a full-page description of your previous marriage(s) and include all:

- a. Address the length of the marriage(s), the number and ages of your children and their living arrangements. (Who has them when and the visitation arrangements).
- b. What were the major reasons for your divorce?
- c. If your previous marriage included affairs, drugs, alcohol abuse, physical abuse or mental illness, say so. If it did not, say so. Honesty here means honesty later!
- d. Specifically describe your role in contributing to the divorce.
- e. What steps have you taken to ensure that these issues will not be repeated?
- f. Has your previous spouse remarried?
- g. Have you received marriage or divorce counseling? How many sessions?

10. Are you previously married with children? Think about these \*things:
- a. Are you your children’s father or mother, or just the support check?
  - b. Do you involve your children in adult issues?
  - c. Are your children burdened by your stresses?
  - d. Do you ‘put down’ the other parent in front of the children?
  - e. Do you use your children to relay messages to the other parent (other than in sealed envelopes)?
  - f. Do you tell your children the status of the other parent’s financial obligations?
  - g. Do you withhold your children from the other parent when you are angry about adult issues?
  - h. Do you tell your children “no” more than twice without swift and measured consequences?
  - i. Is your child a roommate, business partner, confidant, “best friend” or a child needing discipline?

*\*These are major warning signs of the parent’s poor self-esteem, selfishness & immaturity!*

## Section 2: Two Become One

A word about Biblical “Headship” and “Submission.” (*Don’t freak-out just yet!*)

Regardless of what the politically correct think, we are blessed to live in a civilized time and nation. Most of the world for most of its recorded history has not been so blessed. The average male has twice the muscle mass and twice the grip strength of the average female (just find out who winds up opening most of the jars☺.) I assume you would prefer to work out how you deal with disagreements before resorting to violence? The fact remains; outside of calling the police, the man has the ability to physically exact his will on the woman. So... there is no such thing as a “no-fault divorce” and no such thing as a 50%-50% marriage. One will ultimately be held accountable by God for the decisions made because one has power over the other. Is the man “in charge?” Is the woman “in charge?” or is God “in charge?” Who submits to whom?

**Question 11. a & b are for Christians.** Write your own brief sentence “Bumper Sticker” that reveals your understanding of the following verses.

- a. Ephesians 5: <sup>23</sup>*For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.* <sup>24</sup>*Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.* <sup>25</sup>*Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and died for her.*

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- b. If both parties to this marriage followed the ‘Bumper Sticker Logic’ in the real world, would the words “Headship” for the man and “Submission” for the woman be a good or bad thing? Why or why not?

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12. Under what conditions would you consider divorce? (Consider fraud, substance abuse, physical violence, infidelity, etc). Consider this your contract for self-respect!

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13. Do you have/Are you considering a pre-nuptial agreement? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 3: This is where the fun begins!**

14. What was your life like growing up? What were “the rules” in your parents’ homes?

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15. How did your parents get you to do things you didn’t want to do? What type of confrontation do you hate? e.g. Guilt, Silent Treatment, Screaming, Whining, Hitting, etc.

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16. What were the “unwritten “rules” in marriage based on your parents marriage?  
What was wrong in your parents’ marriage that they never discussed publicly?  
How did your Mom and Dad fight to win?

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17. What are your “dirty tricks,” when you don’t want to play fair?

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18. Many divorces stem from immaturity, alcohol or drug abuse and *fraud*. What are your limits on drugs & alcohol in your home? What are your limits to TV, Internet and Pornography? What are the holes in your intended spouse’s history (story)? What are they not telling you? ...What are you not telling your intended spouse?

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19. What have you not told your “Significant Other” that you know you should have? What have you told him/her that is not true? *Pay me now or Pay me later* ☹ – e.g., Prior Marriages, Relationships, Children/Abortions, Financial Obligations, Mental Illness, Sexual Orientation, Rape or Molestation. What is heavy on your heart? Your decision to hide any of these issues can kill a marriage but revealing it doesn’t have to. Honesty builds trust and trust builds intimacy and love makes room for grace ☺. Would you like to share it with the chaplain first?

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20. Parents with multiple marriages (or lovers) teach children by example that it is OK to walk away when things get tough: What steps will you take to secure the permanence of marriage?

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## Section 4: Practical Stuff

21. In what ways are you different from each other? In what ways are you the same?

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22. If you could, what would you change about your intended spouse?

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23. What are your parents' (families') attitudes toward your marriage?

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24. Who would you NOT like to invite to the wedding? Why?

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25. What are the things that irritate you most about your (intended) in-laws?

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26. Where do you (will you) spend the holidays? What is your plan? Be specific!

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27. What will happen to your single friends? (Which ones will be feeling squeezed out?)

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28. What do you like to do for recreation, hobbies and vacation?

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29. Where will you live? (Now, later and retirement) How did you make that decision?

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30. Who is the primary “bread winner” and what will you do if his or her employer requires a transfer to another state?

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31. How will you make decisions about furniture style?

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32. Do you have a budget? How will you make decisions about major purchases?

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33. Total of financial assets: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total of financial liabilities: \$\_\_\_\_\_

34. My plan to be debt-free is:

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35. What are your experiences with credit cards?

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36. Will you have a joint checking account? Is there a better way to handle your bills?

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37. What is your attitude toward having children?

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38. Are you agreed on if, how many and when? (Be specific) When would you adopt?

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39. Are there acceptable reasons for abortion? What are they? (Be specific).

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40. How will you discipline your children? (Spanking? Spoon? Belt? Time-Out?) How & When?

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41. If you are a member of the military or you are marrying one, how will you deal with long periods separated from your spouse? Where will you stay? Will you work? Volunteer?

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## Session 5: Love & Intimacy

This is the #1 reason for wrecked marriages and daily frustration and anger. DO NOT take this section lightly or skip any of the questions! (No one word answers!)

42. Define “Love” and “Intimacy.”...Give examples? *Almost everybody gets this wrong!*

a. Love: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Intimacy: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

43. What is your primary way of showing love? \_\_\_\_\_

44. What are your expectations regarding sex? (*Even if you are already “shacking up”*) What is preferred, acceptable and what is off-limits? God designed the sexual experience for one man and one woman for life. Sex provides emotional ‘superglue’ for marriage. Any prior sexual relationships have already weakened that glue.

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45. My expectation for sex is \_\_\_\_\_ times each week? (*If no experience (YAY!)...we’ll talk ☺*)

Understand that good sex is not learned by osmosis. Most frustration is due to the embarrassment of not clearly expressing your needs. Take responsibility for your own satisfaction. Your sexuality must not be determined by your spouse’s desires, perceptions and ignorance!

Premarital Sex: For most women, premarital sex is like a heroin addiction. The addiction of sex is a (often delusional) sign that someone “loves” them; (Which is how God designed it). They crave it, not for the orgasm but for its meaning of being worthy and secure. To ‘hold off’ for a year means that there is a danger that “he may leave me because I’m not worth loving.” For most men, premarital sex in a relationship is like a case of beer in the refrigerator. As long as there is a beer left on the rack, there is a reason to keep the refrigerator. Ladies: Do you have the emotional ability to hold off long enough to determine if he wants you or a refrigerator? Gentlemen, respect your intended bride! If either of you will not, it probably means you cannot...this is a grave sign of impending marital instability...Neediness & Selfishness!

## Section 6: Case Studies

*50% of marriages involve affairs (flip a coin). Only 25% of divorces are due to affairs...the remainder is due to other forms of selfishness and stupidity.*

46. You have been married for two years. You discover a text message on your spouse's phone that raises suspicion of an affair. What are your options?

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47. You have been married for five years and you have been informed that your spouse had a brief affair one year ago. After your meltdown, your research determines that this was the first. What are your options?

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48. You have been married for five years and you have been informed that your spouse is having an affair. After your meltdown, your research determines that this was the second. What are your options?

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49. You suffer a job loss and impending debt. Your emergency income will run out in 10 days; you cannot pay your mortgage. What is your plan?

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50. What is the name of your counselor or mentor? \_\_\_\_\_

## For the Practicing Christian

51. Why do you wish to be married in the Church of Jesus Christ rather than a civil ceremony?

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52. What role will the Lord Jesus play in your marriage?

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a. In your prayer life?

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b. In your worship Life?

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53. What role will “The Church” have in your married life? How would you participate and contribute to the worship community? Which denomination(s)? How often would you attend?

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54. In your own words, what is the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

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56. What is your understanding of the purpose of tithing? What is your intent regarding your marital finances as stewards of God’s grace?

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57. When struggling with your relationship, when is the appropriate time to consult your pastor, a counselor and a lawyer?

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58. Are there any additional questions or concerns that you would like to address?

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## **Section 7: If I will be performing the Marriage Ceremony**

**Regarding weddings;** *I do very few of them.* I am a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and as such I am a gatekeeper to His Church. The Rite of Christian Marriage is viewed by God as an unbreakable covenant that mirrors his relationship with his people; it is much more than a contract with a “no-fault” clause. If you wish me to perform the rite of Christian marriage you will have to show me you are serious about your commitment to our God and Savior.

God will always be faithful to His children in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, in the good times and the bad. God will not break His covenants and you will not to break yours...it reflects badly on Him☺. Do you practice what you claim to believe? Are you active and fruitful in the Body of Christ, the Church? The decision is yours☺

If you are on the fence and would like to explore who and what God has called you to be, I would be very happy to walk with you on your journey. God’s mercies are new every morning. Maybe this is a new day for your relationship with Jesus.

If you do not claim to be Christian, this does not make you less valuable to God or to me. You are free and encouraged to marry in a civil union and I would be thrilled to be present. I cannot perform the Rite of Christian Marriage but if I believe that your relationship is one that is mutually respectful and reflects the order of God, I would be pleased to offer a prayer or blessing. At a later date, should you find yourselves drawn by God into His Church, I would be delighted to perform the Rite of Christian Marriage at that time.

May God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be with you as you contemplate His will for your life...Amen!

### **The Nuts and Bolts of the Marriage Ceremony**

- Discuss the wedding ceremony and your expectations.
- Who's got the marriage license? No license...no marriage!
- Discuss the reception, plans for the honeymoon and costs.
- What is the maximum amount of money you are willing to pay (inclusive)?
- How are you going to pay for this?
- What is important to you and what is fluff? (What would be cut if you lost 50%?)
- What part(s) will family and friends have in the wedding?
- Who is not invited to the wedding and why?
- Do you have a preferred Scripture text or music?

*Reminder: This is a worship service. Crying in your beer country tunes are for the reception ;-)*

- \* The marriage license will be presented to me no later than the rehearsal or the day prior.
  - No license-no wedding☺