— 8 ESSENTIAL MODULES —

A PREMARITAL PREPARATION GUIDE

Building It Right

Before You Begin

The conversations every couple must have before they say "I do"

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Know Yourself	Right Person	Expect-ations	Commun-ication	Roles & Headship	Sex & Intimacy	Money & Family	Covenant Commit.

"Those contemplating marriage must make it a subject of serious, earnest reflection now — before the wedding, not after."
— Lloyd D. Allen, MSc.

Lloyd D. Allen, MSc.
MARRIAGE EDUCATOR • THERAPIST • COACH • SPEAKER

lloydallen.org
MrMarriage.com

INTRODUCTION

Building It Right Before You Begin

A Premarital Preparation Guide

Marriage is the most significant covenant a human being will ever enter. It is not a social arrangement, a romantic experiment, or a legal convenience. It is a lifelong, binding, sacred commitment made before God — and it deserves to be entered with far more preparation than most couples bring to it.

After nearly thirty years of working with married couples — in counseling rooms, coaching sessions, and crisis interventions — one pattern has become unmistakably clear: the seeds of most marital problems are planted before the wedding. They are planted in unexamined personal histories, unspoken expectations, incompatible values, and the naive assumption that love alone is sufficient to sustain a lifetime commitment.

It is not. Love is essential. But love without wisdom, self-awareness, honest communication, and biblical clarity is a foundation built on sand. This guide exists to give you something more solid.

The eight modules in this guide address the most critical dimensions of marriage preparation: who you are, who you are choosing, what you expect, how you communicate, how you will lead and partner, how you will experience physical intimacy, how you will handle money and family, and what you are ultimately committing to.

This guide is not designed to tell you whether to get married. It is designed to ensure that if you do, you enter that covenant with your eyes open, your conversations complete, and your foundation as strong as it can possibly be.

The best time to prepare for a great marriage is before you say 'I do.' That time is now.

Lloyd D. Allen, MSc.

Marriage Educator • Therapist • Coach • Speaker

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MODULE 01 OF 8

Know Yourself Before You Choose Someone Else

The Foundation of Every Healthy Marriage Is a Whole Person

THE FOUNDATION

The most dangerous person to marry is someone who does not know themselves. Before you can build a life with another person, you must be honest about who you actually are — not who you hope to be, not who you perform for others, but who you genuinely are when no one is watching. This module is not about perfection. It is about honesty. A marriage built on self-awareness has a foundation that a marriage built on self-deception can never have.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Your personal history will show up in your marriage whether you examine it or not. The home you grew up in, the wounds you carry, the patterns you witnessed — these do not disappear at the altar. They walk down the aisle with you every single day.**
- **Emotional maturity is more important than romantic feelings. The ability to regulate emotions, take responsibility, and remain present under pressure is what actually sustains a marriage when feelings fluctuate — and they always fluctuate.**
- **Unresolved wounds become marital weapons. A spouse cannot fix what only God and intentional healing can address. Bringing unresolved wounds into marriage does not just hurt you — it hurts the person you love most.**
- **Your patterns in relationships reveal your readiness for marriage. How you handle conflict, disappointment, and pressure is your most honest autobiography — and your future spouse will eventually read every chapter.**
- **Knowing yourself means knowing your non-negotiables. What are your core values? What does your faith require of your marriage? Entering marriage without clarity on these questions guarantees painful discoveries.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Attachment theory demonstrates that patterns formed in childhood directly shape how adults experience intimacy, handle conflict, and respond to perceived rejection in marriage. Securely attached individuals build healthier marriages. Anxiously or avoidantly attached individuals bring predictable relational patterns that, unexamined, will repeat in marriage. Attachment patterns can change — but only through awareness and intentional work. You cannot change what you refuse to examine.

THEOLOGICAL

Psalm 139:23-24 — 'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.' The Hebrew word chaqar means to investigate thoroughly, to examine to the very bottom. David was not asking for a surface inspection — he was inviting a complete examination of everything within him. That same courage — the willingness to be fully known before fully committing — is the greatest gift you can bring to your marriage.

MODULE 02 OF 8

Is This the Right Person?

Beyond Feelings — Choosing Wisely for a Lifetime

THE FOUNDATION

Feelings brought you here. But feelings alone cannot tell you whether this person is right for you. Attraction fades, chemistry shifts, and the euphoria of early love was never designed to be your primary decision-making tool for a lifetime covenant. This module gives you the honest, biblical, and practical framework for answering the most important question you will ever ask — not 'do I love this person' but 'is this the right person to build a life with?'

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Compatibility is deeper than chemistry. Shared values, shared faith, shared vision for the future, and shared commitment to growth matter infinitely more than shared interests or physical attraction. Chemistry is the spark. Compatibility keeps the fire burning for a lifetime.**
- **Character is what you are marrying. Not potential — character. Who this person is right now, under pressure, in private, when things go wrong — that is who will show up in your marriage every single day. Never marry potential. Marry demonstrated character.**
- **Red flags do not disappear after the wedding — they multiply. Every concerning pattern you are dismissing or excusing right now will be significantly magnified inside the pressure of marriage. Take the flags seriously now.**
- **Spiritual alignment is non-negotiable. Two people cannot build a covenant marriage on two different foundations. Shared faith is not about attending the same church — it is about sharing the same ultimate authority and eternal perspective on what marriage is.**
- **Wise counsel is not optional — it is essential. If the people closest to you have serious concerns, those concerns deserve serious consideration — not dismissal.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Neuroscience confirms that romantic love activates the same brain regions as addiction — producing dopamine-driven euphoria that literally impairs rational judgment. This is why the early stage of love feels so certain and why it is the worst possible time to make a permanent decision without external wisdom and honest self-examination.

THEOLOGICAL

Proverbs 4:23 — 'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.' The Hebrew word natsar means to watch, to guard, to protect with vigilance. God does not say ignore your heart — He says guard it. Bring it under wisdom. Your heart is a gift. But it needs a guardian.

MODULE 03 OF 8

Expectations — The Hidden Marriage Killer

Name Them Now or Fight About Them Later

THE FOUNDATION

Every person walking into marriage carries a suitcase full of expectations — most of them unspoken, many of them unconscious, and some of them completely unrealistic. When those expectations collide with reality, the result is not just disappointment — it is a slow, quiet devastation that erodes the marriage from the inside. This module gives you the tools to name your expectations now — before they become the source of your greatest conflicts.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **An unspoken expectation is a preloaded resentment. Every expectation you carry into marriage without voicing it is a disappointment waiting to happen — and a resentment waiting to be assigned. Your partner cannot meet an expectation they do not know exists.**
- **Most expectations come from your family of origin. The home you grew up in taught you what normal looks like. Your partner grew up in a completely different normal. Collision is not incompatibility — it is an invitation to create something new together.**
- **Romantic expectations are the most dangerous. The cultural narrative of marriage sets couples up for chronic disappointment. Real marriage is not a highlight reel. It is a daily, ordinary, beautiful choice made by two imperfect people committed to something eternal.**
- **Unmet expectations require renegotiation, not resentment. The healthy response is an honest conversation — not silent scorekeeping, withdrawal, or explosive conflict.**
- **Some expectations need to be surrendered entirely. Part of premarital preparation is honestly evaluating which expectations reflect genuine needs and which reflect immaturity or cultural conditioning.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Cognitive psychology identifies expectation violation as one of the primary triggers of relational dissatisfaction. When reality consistently fails to match our mental model, the brain registers a threat response — producing frustration and eventually contempt. Couples who explicitly discuss and align their expectations before marriage show significantly higher satisfaction and lower conflict in the first five years than those who do not.

THEOLOGICAL

Philippians 4:11 — 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content.' The Greek word autarkes means not dependent on external circumstances for internal peace. Healthy marriage does not complete you — it complements you. Entering marriage expecting another person to fulfill what only God can provide is a setup for devastating disappointment. Root your contentment in Christ. Build your marriage on truth.

MODULE 04 OF 8

Communication — Learning to Talk Before You Fight

Build the Skills Now That Will Save You Later

THE FOUNDATION

Every couple communicates. Very few couples communicate well. And almost no couple discovers how poorly they communicate until they are deep inside a conflict they do not have the tools to resolve. Communication is not a gift you either have or you do not — it is a skill you either develop or you do not. This module gives you the practical, honest tools to build a communication foundation strong enough to sustain every season your marriage will face.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Talking is not the same as communicating. Real communication is not the transfer of information — it is the creation of genuine understanding. The goal is not to be heard. It is for your spouse to feel heard. That distinction changes everything.**
- **You must know how you communicate under pressure before you marry. Do you withdraw? Escalate? Shut down? Attack? Your pressure patterns are your real communication style — and your future spouse needs to know them before the wedding.**
- **Listening is the most underrated marriage skill. Most people listen to respond, not to understand. The couple that learns to listen fully before responding has already solved half of their future conflicts before they begin.**
- **Conflict is inevitable — destruction is optional. Every couple will disagree. The question is whether you have the skills to navigate it without causing lasting damage to the person you love.**
- **Emotional safety is the prerequisite for honest communication. Your spouse will only tell you the truth to the level they trust it is safe to do so. Build a relationship where honesty is always safe.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Dr. John Gottman identified four communication patterns — criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling — as the most reliable predictors of marital breakdown. Contempt was found to be the single greatest predictor of divorce. The antidote to each is a learnable skill. Couples who address these patterns before marriage are measurably better equipped to build lasting relationships than those who discover them in the middle of a crisis.

THEOLOGICAL

James 1:19 — 'Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.' The Greek word tachys — quick — means swift, ready, prepared in advance. This is not passive — it is trained, intentional readiness. Proverbs 18:21 — 'the tongue has the power of life and death.' The words you speak to your spouse will either build them up or tear them down. There is no neutral. Learn now to speak life.

MODULE 05 OF 8

Roles, Headship, and Partnership

Building a Marriage That Works for Both of You

THE FOUNDATION

One of the most avoided and most necessary conversations in premarital preparation is how your marriage will actually function. Who leads? Who decides? Who does what? Most couples either avoid this entirely or have it for the first time in the middle of a conflict — the worst possible moment to establish clarity. This module gives you the biblical framework and practical tools to build a marriage structure that honors God, respects both partners, and actually works in real life.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Biblical headship is servant leadership — nothing less and nothing more. The husband's role is not a license for control or dominance. Ephesians 5 calls husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church — sacrificially, consistently, and at personal cost.**
- **Submission is a posture of trust, not a position of inferiority. The Greek word hupotasso — submission — was a military term meaning to support the mission. A wife who submits to godly leadership is the essential partner without whom the mission cannot succeed.**
- **Roles must be discussed, not assumed. Who manages finances? How are major decisions made? How are children disciplined? These are the architecture of your daily life together. Discuss them now.**
- **Partnership means both voices matter. Biblical headship does not silence the wife — it protects her voice. A husband who does not genuinely seek and consider his wife's perspective is not leading biblically. That is control.**
- **Roles will flex through seasons — values must not. Careers change, children arrive, circumstances evolve. What must remain constant are sacrificial love, mutual respect, and covenant faithfulness.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Research consistently shows that couples who establish clear, mutually agreed-upon relational roles report significantly higher marital satisfaction than those who operate on unspoken or contested assumptions. Clarity reduces anxiety, prevents resentment, and creates the psychological safety both partners need to thrive.

THEOLOGICAL

Genesis 2:18 introduces the wife as ezer — a Hebrew word meaning strong helper, lifesaver, one who comes alongside to provide what is missing. This same word is used elsewhere in Scripture exclusively to describe God Himself coming to the aid of His people. The role of wife in a biblical marriage is not secondary — it is indispensable. Build your marriage on that truth.

MODULE 06 OF 8

Sex, Intimacy, and Physical Connection

Preparing Honestly for the Most Misunderstood Dimension of Marriage

THE FOUNDATION

No area of marriage is more anticipated, more misunderstood, and more poorly prepared for than physical intimacy. Couples arrive at marriage carrying cultural messaging, personal history, unrealistic expectations, and unspoken fears — and then wonder why this dimension is so much harder than expected. This module gives you the honest, biblical, and practical preparation that most premarital courses are too uncomfortable to provide — because your marriage deserves truth, not silence.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Sex in marriage is God's idea — and He had a very good one. Physical intimacy was His deliberate, beautiful, specific gift to the marriage covenant. Song of Solomon exists precisely to establish that God celebrates physical intimacy between a husband and wife. Shame has no place here.**
- **Your history will show up in your bedroom. Past sexual experiences, pornography use, sexual trauma, and purity culture wounds all follow couples into marriage. Honest conversation — and professional support where needed — is not optional. It is essential.**
- **Expectations about sex must be discussed before marriage. Frequency, initiation, preferences, and what intimacy means to each partner — these conversations feel uncomfortable before marriage and become explosive conflicts inside it. Have them now.**
- **Sexual intimacy is a barometer of the entire marriage. When emotional safety, communication, and mutual respect are strong, physical intimacy thrives. When they break down, physical intimacy is usually the first casualty.**
- **Virginity is not the only thing you bring to your marriage bed — wholeness is. The goal is always a whole, honest, emotionally healthy person entering a covenant commitment, regardless of personal history.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Men and women are neurobiologically wired differently in their approach to sexual intimacy. Men are generally more visually stimulated and physically driven. Women generally require emotional safety and relational connection as prerequisites for physical desire. Neither wiring is wrong — both must be understood and honored. Couples who understand these differences before marriage navigate the adjustment period far more successfully.

THEOLOGICAL

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 establishes one of the most countercultural principles in marriage theology — mutual authority over each other's bodies. The Greek word opheile — translated duty — carries the meaning of a debt gladly fulfilled. Physical intimacy in marriage is not a reward or a weapon. It is a covenant expression of belonging — freely given, mutually cherished, and spiritually significant.

MODULE 07 OF 8

Money, Family, and the Life You Are Building

Aligning on the Practical Architecture of Your Shared Life

THE FOUNDATION

Money and family are the two most common sources of marital conflict in the first five years of marriage — and they are almost never discussed with sufficient honesty before the wedding. Most couples spend more time choosing their reception venue than discussing their financial values or in-law boundaries. This module gives you the practical, honest framework for aligning on the real-life details that will either unite you or divide you from the very beginning of your marriage.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Your relationship with money reveals your values. How you spend, save, give, and handle debt reflects what you believe about security, generosity, and the future. Two people with fundamentally different money values are not just financially incompatible — they are values incompatible.**
- **Financial unity requires a system, not just a conversation. Agreeing that you will handle money well is not enough. You need an actual system — a budget, a giving plan, a savings strategy, and clear agreements about who manages what.**
- **In-law boundaries must be established before they are needed. Genesis 2:24 is explicit — leave and cleave. The leaving is not merely geographical. It is emotional, financial, and relational. Establish your boundaries before the pressure arrives.**
- **Lifestyle expectations must be honestly aligned. Where will you live? Will both spouses work? When will you have children? Discovering fundamental incompatibilities after the wedding is avoidable. Avoiding the conversation is not.**
- **Generosity must be built into your marriage from the beginning. A couple that establishes giving as non-negotiable from day one builds a marriage that transcends their own needs. Generosity is not a financial decision — it is a spiritual discipline.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Financial stress is one of the most physiologically taxing experiences a couple can share — elevating cortisol, disrupting sleep, and triggering neurological threat responses. Research from the American Psychological Association consistently identifies money as the number one source of stress in relationships. Couples who establish financial alignment before marriage show measurably lower stress and higher satisfaction in the critical first years.

THEOLOGICAL

Malachi 3:10 and Matthew 6:33 establish the biblical framework for financial life in marriage — seek first the kingdom, bring the whole tithe, and trust God with the rest. The Hebrew word bechon — test me — is the only place in Scripture where God invites humanity to test Him. Financial faithfulness is an act of covenant trust — a declaration that God is the owner, you are the managers, and His principles are your operating system.

Covenant Commitment — What You Are Actually Saying Yes To

The Full Weight and Beauty of the Vow You Are About to Make

THE FOUNDATION

Most couples spend months planning a wedding and very little time understanding what they are actually committing to at the altar. The word covenant is used casually — but it is anything but casual. It is the most serious, most sacred, and most binding agreement a human being can enter. This module ensures that when you say 'I do' you know exactly what you are saying yes to — and that you are saying it with your whole self.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **A covenant is not a contract. A contract is conditional — I will if you will. A covenant is unconditional — I will because I said I would. The moment you reduce your marriage to a contract you have introduced an exit clause that will be invoked the moment conditions become difficult enough.**
- **Forsaking all others is more than a promise about fidelity. It is a daily decision to choose your spouse above every competing affection, allegiance, and alternative — your past, your parents, your career ambition, and your personal comfort.**
- **For better or for worse is a promise made for the worst moments — not the best. Anyone can stay married when everything is good. The covenant is tested and proven in the seasons of sickness, financial crisis, loss, and failure.**
- **Love in covenant is a decision, not a feeling. Feelings are passengers — they come and go based on circumstances. Decision is the driver. Extraordinary marriages are built by people who choose love on the days they do not feel it at all.**
- **Your marriage covenant is a testimony to a watching world. Every marriage that remains faithful, grows deeper, and reflects sacrificial love preaches a sermon that no pulpit can replicate. Your covenant is not just about you.**

BIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Commitment — defined psychologically as the intention to persist in a relationship long term — is the single most reliable predictor of marital stability across all research demographics. Couples with strong commitment scores navigate conflict, disappointment, and crisis significantly more successfully than those with low commitment. Commitment is not a feeling. It is a decision reinforced daily by deliberate choices aligned with the covenant made.

THEOLOGICAL

Ruth 1:16-17 — 'Where you go I will go. Where you lodge I will lodge.' The Hebrew word dabaq — used in Genesis 2:24 for cleaving to a spouse — means to cling, to pursue hard after, to refuse to let go. When you stand at that altar, you are not simply beginning a relationship. You are entering the most sacred human agreement available — one that reflects the very covenant God made with His people. Say yes to that. With everything you have.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The Marriage Worth Fighting For Starts Here

You have just worked through eight of the most important conversations a couple can have before marriage. That alone puts you in a category that most engaged couples never reach. Most couples arrive at the altar having planned a beautiful ceremony and given almost no serious thought to what comes after it. You have done something different. You have done the work.

But let this be said clearly — completing this guide is not a guarantee of a perfect marriage. No guide, no course, and no counselor can offer that. Marriage will still surprise you. It will still challenge you in ways you did not anticipate. There will still be seasons of hardship, miscommunication, and growth that is painful before it is beautiful.

What this preparation gives you is a foundation. A shared language. A set of honest conversations that most couples spend years — sometimes decades — getting around to having. You have named your expectations, examined your character, aligned your values, and looked honestly at the covenant you are about to enter. That is not nothing. That is everything.

The marriage you are building is worth the preparation you have invested. Every hour of honest conversation, every uncomfortable truth spoken, every expectation named rather than assumed — it is all architecture. It is all foundation. And a marriage built on that kind of foundation does not just survive the storms that will come. It grows stronger in them.

Now go build something extraordinary.

> ***"The marriage you build today is the legacy your children will inherit tomorrow."***

— Lloyd D. Allen, MSc.

Marriage Educator • Therapist • Coach • Speaker

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Ready to Go Deeper?

The Complete Premarital Preparation Course

This ebook gives you the foundation. The full Premarital Preparation Course gives you everything else — the deep-dive teaching, the interactive tools, the practical worksheets, and the guided exercises that take every module from information to transformation.

WHAT YOU GET IN THE FULL COURSE

✓ **8 In-Depth Video Modules**

Full teaching on every critical area of marriage preparation — presented with 30 years of professional insight, biblical depth, and real-world application.

✓ **8 Practical Worksheets and Tools**

One powerful, hands-on tool per module — designed to move you from reading to doing. Complete them together as a couple and watch your conversations transform.

✓ **Pre and Post Course Assessments**

Know exactly where you are starting and measure how far you have grown by the time you complete the course. Track your readiness in real time.

✓ **Couples Discussion Guides**

Structured conversation prompts for every module — so you always know what to say next and how to make the most of your time together.

✓ **Biblical and Psychological Framework**

Every module integrates Hebrew and Greek word studies, attachment theory, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience into one cohesive, faith-grounded curriculum.

✓ **Lifetime Access**

Come back to any module any time — before the wedding, after the wedding, or whenever a specific area of your marriage needs attention.

✓ **Certificate of Completion**

Receive a formal certificate confirming you have completed the course — a meaningful milestone to mark your commitment to your marriage before it begins.

You have already done something most couples never do — you started. Now finish strong. The full course is waiting for you.

Enroll today at

MrMarriage.com/premarital

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