Topics for Couples Considering Marriage

1. Expectations
   a. Myths about marriage
   b. Optimism vs. Over-Idealism
2. Spiritual Oneness
   a. Understanding your spouse’s relationship with God
   b. Scripture, devotional time, prayer, worship, and service
3. Communication
   a. You can talk, but can you communicate?
   b. Understanding filters—the things that get in the way of good communication
   c. Different levels of emotional expression
4. Conflict Resolution
   a. Conflict: A positive force for change or destructive marriage killer
   b. Knowing the warning signs: Escalation, Withdrawal, Invalidation, and Negative Interpretation, Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness, and Stonewalling
   c. Separating issues from events and identifying complimentary vs. contradictory traits
5. Finances
   a. Budget, Budget, Budget
   b. The hidden issues of power, impulse control, and security
   c. Standard of living and stewardship
6. Sexuality
   a. Sexual abstinence is essential during engagement
   b. Understanding each other’s sexual physiology, response, and needs
   c. Expectations for the honeymoon
7. Understanding Love and Your Love Style
   a. Understanding the three sided model of love—Commitment, Passion, and Intimacy
   b. Giving and receiving affection
   c. Knowing your love language
8. Your Family of Origin
   a. Recognizing that you are really marrying a stranger
   b. Separating from your family and becoming reliant upon each other—Leaving and Cleaving
   c. Family traditions and holidays
   d. Joining a new family
9. Gender Differences
   a. Learning to enjoy the differences
   b. The Connection/Autonomy challenge
   c. Avoiding the Pursuer/Distancer trap
10. Roles, Power, and Career
    a. The leadership structure of the bone
    b. How decision will be made will be made

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c. How important is your career?
11. Friends and Leisure Time Activities
   a. How are we going to spend our free time?
   b. Who are our friends?
   c. The openness of the home
12. Children
   a. How many children do we want? How soon?
   b. How do we want our children to be raised?
   c. Preparing to be a parent
13. Marriage Mentoring
   a. Learning from experienced couples
   b. Post-marital check-ups
14. Plans for Enrichment in Marriage
   a. Where are we headed as a couple?
   b. What will we do to keep us growing together?
   c. How will we know when we need to step back and refocus?

Ted Witzig, Jr., Ph.D.