



In preparation for our sermon series on healthy sexuality and the sermon on February 4, 2018 on marriage, we asked people at Sterling some questions about marriage. We wanted to have the opportunity to hear and learn from one another. We asked about some of the struggles and lessons in marriage, as well as what advice they had to people getting married. Here are those responses to the last question.

What is one thing you would tell a couple who is planning on getting married?

- Love is more a matter of the will than a matter of emotion. Not a matter of feeling, but remember that with God's help you can.
- Invest in your relationship, continue to date, work at marriage enrichment, maintain a sense of humour, develop and share common passions, continue to challenge yourself and each other to stretch and grow.
- Marriage and sex are very beautiful things, but keep yourself pure. When you are in love, it's not too hard to go too far. Make sure you are on the same basis with God, that you will live a life together for Him.
- Talk things over and forgive one another. Talk about it and don't leave it hanging. Do it right away before it's too late. Don't let the parents interfere. Work it out between the two of you.
- Talk to and spend time with each other. Never go to bed angry with your partner. It isn't always an easy path but working through things as a couple is important. Love deeply, hug often.
- Don't live together before you get married. That "thrill" doesn't last long till life kicks in. If you live together before you are married, there is no difference (except a piece of legal paper) so you move to "life" right away and may not experience the fun/joy/excitement that the beginning of marriage has. Marriage is not just love and sex – it is a huge commitment where you are supposed to live together (and get along, and agree) for the rest of your life. It's a big deal.
- Kids change everything – absolutely every aspect of life/marriage (for the better). Don't have kids cause you are supposed to or someone says it is time to – do when it is right for you. Do "fun" stuff when you first get married, get your "stuff" that you think you need cause after that, your whole focus changes and the kid(s) is the most important so you never really have time/\$ again to do what you want until you are too old to do it or care about it. You don't want to have regrets when you have kids – it is the best but you need to be really ready for it. Also, some don't realize what a responsibility getting a dog is – it's not just something to do – it takes \$, time, commitment, love, etc. (almost like a kid). Life is no longer about you when you add to the couple.
- "Happy wife, happy life!" - What does that look like? You need to work on your relationship daily. Be a giver. We are naturally selfish and our tendency is to take and take. She is not your mother! Trust me, the more you give, the more you get out of the relationship. Wish I would have learned that 20 years ago.
- Don't sweat the small stuff, and at the same time, keep talking and communicating! It REALLY helps to have a sense of humour. Laughing together is a wonderful thing and diffuses a lot of tension.
- Be very sure and be honest and communicate, and don't forget Your faith. Make sure God is always with you in your life. ALWAYS BE READY TO SAY YOU ARE SORRY, AND FORGIVE AND FORGET, AND THANK YOU.

- Well that one depends on who the couple is. I think I would say learn to really forgive and not hold grudges or keep record of wrongs. Be gentle with each other and pray for each other.
- Each marriage is unique. Don't expect it to be an easy road. But if you are committed to walking it together no matter what, you will be okay. During the toughest times, make sure to keep communication open and keep God in your marriage.
- Be on the same page about everything. This includes budgets, chores, and most importantly, faith.
- One piece of advice I would tell a couple getting married would be to take time to pray together. I can feel the most close/connected to my spouse when we come together in prayer over each other, circumstances, praise items, family, friends etc.
- Do it! It's awesome! But only if you really know the person, and know that you can commit to them for life. For example, have you talked about things like money? Family life? Church life? Do they help you to be your best self? Etc. I think it is important to have these tough conversations ahead of time so that you know what you are getting into. And know which things are workable and which aren't.
- Get marriage counselling! Have someone help you to bring up serious topics and get you to talk about them. It also teaches you a lot about the kind of person your partner is in terms of their willingness to participate in these conversations and it helps you to see how you problem solve and work through issues as a couple.
- I would tell them that they will likely be surprised, in both good ways and bad. Entering into a marriage is entering into a whole new level of vulnerability, which can bring all kinds of blessings and challenges. Also, be sure to intentionally carve out time to spend with each other and do not take this time for granted.
- Talk about the things that look like small stuff now, because if you don't work through it now, it's going to be a lot more difficult and challenging later on. I'd also remind them that love is more than a feeling; that love is a commitment (there may be days where you don't feel very loving).
- Well there are many things, but I believe it is good to understand that marriage should not be taken lightly; it is a commitment based on love and respect.
- Keep God in all your planning and decision-making.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate. Share the work. Enjoy each other. Love and honour your partner - even when you don't feel like it.
- Marry your best friend. Be open, honest, forgiving, and loyal to your spouse. Even when the kids come, or life gets really busy; make time for yourselves. Have a regular date night. Even if it means eating supper after the kids are in bed.
- Have an open mind to not only your ideas but your spouse's. Focus on the things that attract you to each other and not things that might pull you apart. Keep the faith, baby! Remember you are not in control - a common faith is also an awesome thing.
- Every relationship is different. Do what works for your relationship. If something is bothering you, tell your partner first, not your family and friends. On your wedding day, don't stress about the little things because they will all sort themselves out.
- Future Mr. + Mrs... listen. To each other, to good advice from others and most importantly, to God. Make prayer a priority and put Him first.
- Help each other to become all that God intended you to be. The goal is wholeness as a couple, not two people living their own lives, together.
- Make sure you love the other for who they are because the things that frustrate you will continue to frustrate you. You're marrying a person, not a project and though you will change and grow together, a lot of the other person will stay the same.