

BICF Marriage Policy

Marriage is the exclusive and sacred union of one man and one woman for life (Genesis 1:27, 2:23-25; Matthew 19:6; Malachi 2:14; Ephesians 5:22-33). It is a (symbolic) picture of Christ's everlasting, unbreakable, love for His Church. Marriage is an expression of unity, where husband and wife become, in a sense, two persons in one. This unity is not only a physical unity; it is also a spiritual and emotional unity of profound dimensions. BICF Pastors will perform marriages for a man and woman who have not been divorced, this is God's ideal. We may consider exceptional cases after careful examination by the Elders (Matthew 19:3-9, 5:32).

BICF Leadership Marriage Policy

Pastoral, elder, and deacon positions in the BICF may not be held by anyone who has been divorced and remarried or who is married to someone who has been divorced and remarried as long as previous spouses are still living (1 Timothy 3:1-13).

BICF Pre-Marital Counseling Guidelines

What We Believe

Marriage is one of the most important commitments a person can make. Second only to your decision to follow Christ, marriage will have a great impact on your life, your family, your friends, and your future. We all know the sad fact that many marriages are failing in our time. One reason is because far too many churches have failed to recognize their responsibility to properly equip people to enter into and maintain marriage. We want, with God's help, to help you as much as we can to be ready to marry. Performing wedding ceremonies is our choice; it is not something we are obligated to do. This means if we feel you and your fiancé are not ready, or should not be married for any reason, we will decline to perform your wedding and share with you why we believe this to be true. In Christian marriage, you are making a vow to God to fulfill all that He requires for marriage as outlined in the Bible. Because of the great significance and importance of the marriage vows, all parties should approach marriage prayerfully, patiently, and honestly. Because we love the Lord and you, we want His best and your best.

How do you know if you are ready to be married by a BICF Pastor?

1) You and your fiancé are both believers in Christ.

If one of you is a Christian and the other is not then a Pastor will share with you the great value in first establishing a relationship with Christ.

2) You and your fiancé agree to demonstrate sexual purity during your engagement period.

3) You and your fiancé affirm Marriage is the exclusive and sacred union of one man and one woman for life (Genesis 1:27, 2:23-25; Matthew 19:6; Malachi 2:14; Ephesians 5:22-33). It is a picture of Christ's everlasting, unbreakable, love for His Church. Marriage is an expression

of unity, where husband and wife become, in a sense, two persons in one. This unity is not only a physical unity; it is also a spiritual and emotional unity of profound dimensions. BICF Pastors will perform marriages for a man and woman who have not been divorced, this is God's ideal. We may consider exceptional cases after careful examination by the Elders (Matthew 19:3-9, 5:32).

Assuming you and your fiancé affirm the above three statements, you may complete the attached Premarital Questionnaire and email it to pastoral@bicf.org and a BICF Pastor will then contact you regarding next steps and requirements to be considered for a BICF marriage.

NOTE: BICF Pastors, reserve the right to discontinue the counseling, planning, and ceremony process at any time, at their discretion.

Both you and your fiancé need to complete a questionnaire.

General Information

Have you set a tentative date for your wedding? _____

If yes, when? And where? _____

Personal Information

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Fiancé's Name: _____ Age: _____

Reference (someone we can contact to learn more about you)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Marital Status

Have you been married before? _____ If yes, how many times? _____

For how long? _____

Are you: Divorced _____ Widowed _____ Separated _____

Is your divorce final? _____ If not, when? _____

Do you have children from a previous marriage? _____ If yes, how many? _____

What are their ages? _____

Engagement Period

How long have you known each other? _____

How long have you been dating each other? _____

How long have you been engaged? _____

Family Background

Very briefly, describe your family background. (E.g. Relationship of parents and your upbringing; number of siblings; status of your parents' marriage).

General Questions:

1. What are the career plans for each of you once you are married?

2. What are some of the challenges you are facing in relation to friends and family members in regard to your marriage? _____

3. Have you been in the past or are you presently living together? _____

4. Are you presently or have you been sexually active together? _____

5. What is your commitment as a couple to reading the Bible and praying together?

6. In regards to having and raising children, what are the goals you have discussed together?

7. How are disagreements and conflict best resolved between you and your fiancée? (Briefly describe)

8. In discussing your sexual expectations with one another, what, if any, are your concerns?

9. What type of specific plan have the two of you discussed for how to manage your finances?

10. What are your views of the roles and responsibilities of the husband and of the wife respectively?

11. As you approach marriage, what would be the greatest challenge that you believe you will be facing as husband and wife?

Religious Background

Briefly share your testimony or spiritual story. Who is Christ to you and what role does He play in your daily life?

Do you consider yourself an active daily follower of Jesus Christ? _____

If you are a Christian, how has knowing Christ changed your life:

_____?

Do you regularly attend BICF? _____ For how long? _____

What congregation do you attend at BICF? _____

Who do you see as your BICF Pastor? _____

What church (if any) did you attend before BICF? _____

Contact information and name of Pastor(s) who may know you and your
finance _____

Why did you leave your last church before joining BICF?

Please answer the following questions as completely yet as briefly as possible. Remember that our goal is to help you prepare for marriage. Therefore be honest with your responses. Don't simply write the answers you think we expect.

1. Write a definition of "Love".

2. How do you know you "love" your fiancé?

3. How have you prepared for marriage?

Have you read marriage related books? _____
If so, please list them. _____

Have you listened to audio/video teachings on Christian marriage? _____
If so, please list them. _____

Have you attended any classes about marriage? _____

If yes, please describe them. _____

4. What do you expect from marriage that you cannot have by staying single?

5. Give some reasons why you want to marry your fiancé.

6. What do you see as your role in the marriage?

7. What do you see as your mates' role in marriage?

8. With so many marriages failing today, why do think yours will succeed?

9. How do other members of your family feel about your fiancé?

10. How do your best friends feel about your fiancé?

Premarital counseling is generally required for all prospective marriage candidates. After reviewing your submitted replies a BICF Pastor will be in contact with you regarding required next steps.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above, and that all of the information filled in is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____ / ____ / ____ Date

Meeting with a BICF Leader

We look forward to meeting you and discussing your marriage plans. These are the areas we will focus on:

1. Each couple must complete the attached Pre-Marital Questionnaire before counseling will be scheduled.
2. After you have submitted your questionnaire, an appointment will be made to meet with a pastor, in order to determine how to best move forward.
3. Before a final wedding date is set, the couple must complete pre-marital counseling. Normally this is about five sessions. Sometimes this can be partially done with other pastors/counselors in your homeland.
4. We rejoice with you at this happy time of your lives. And we suggest this time of counseling and reflection because even if you are a Christian, you can expect your marriage to have some problems or difficulties. That is normal for everyone. You must seek God's blessing, walk in the Spirit, and obey Him before, during, and long after the wedding.
5. A Christian wedding is a sacred event. Therefore, we sincerely hope your entire ceremony will be conducted with reverence, and centered on Jesus Christ. We hope this important truth will guide you in all the details of the planning, such as sensitivity to others in extravagance, modest dress, foods and beverages served. We would be glad to think through these important issues with you.
6. It will be your responsibility to make the arrangements for the proper legal recognition of your marriage in your home country(s). Our services and ceremony are intended for spiritual blessing and benefit of your married life.

Adopted by the BICF Community Elders, 2015