

Engaged!

*The blueprint for our
marriage... with God as
the Architect!*

**A Workbook
By Carl Lungstrum**

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Introduction

For _____ and _____

Wedding Date: _____

Plan Date: _____

God purposed marriage to be a blessing! In this plan you are building something beautiful! You are building your own marriage with God at the center. Thank you for caring enough to make a deliberate plan for success. Several years from now you will further see the value of making a plan at this stage. You will occasionally need to review this plan and make adjustments.

This booklet becomes the blueprint for your marriage... with God as the Architect! You must work together to compile the responses. For the Biblical questions you should use Biblical answers. Read every scripture cited in the booklet. There is more than one right answer for many of the questions, so do not think your answers have to line up exactly. If you are unsure about a scripture or a question, consult with mature Christians, elders and their wives, or others you respect in their marriage.

This booklet is your personal possession. If you marry, it will become a priceless keepsake. Your written responses are meant for your eyes only. You should, however, freely discuss with others all the scriptures that are referenced.

Identity and Expectations

Get the two forms from the back cover of this booklet and separately write out your thoughts. After completing the forms, set a time to share your responses privately. After sharing your responses, return the forms to the back cover for permanent keeping. Do this before proceeding with the rest of this booklet.

Warning!! Do not reasonably expect to see desirable traits in your spouse during marriage, which you do not see before marriage. Do not think that marriage will soften someone up for change. Marriage does not instantly improve a person's character; rather it puts their existing character to a greater test. Consequently, do not have a plan, perhaps a secret plan, to change the person after marriage. This is not to say that we should not all grow in character during marriage; but it is to say that fruit inspections of integrity, attitudes, and actions before marriage really matter.

Honesty really counts here. This is true in yourself and in your fiancé. Do not fail to disclose any information which should rightfully be known by a prospective spouse. It may be spiritual, psychological, mental, physiological, sexual, financial, criminal, a previous marriage or another relationship, or something else.

If two people do not observe acceptable values or compatible behavior, both in courtship, and now, on paper; they need to back off, and delay or cancel marriage.

Be honest. Before marriage say, "I can joyfully live with the person I know now." If this is not true, it is not time to get married. There is no dishonor in remaining single. There can be terrible consequences if marriage is entered without realistic identifications and expectations.

Worthy of Marriage

First, Read the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament of the Bible. It is a great story of two people, Ruth and Boaz, who, previously unknown to each other, were individually worthy participants in marriage.

Ruth, a young Moabite widow, was worthy because...

- She served the God of the Israelites.
- She selflessly dedicated herself to her widowed mother-in-law.
- She did not eat the bread of idleness, nor was she too good for field labor.
- She did not assert herself or demand any privileges.
- She was controlled in spirit.
- She was content. "When she could not lift up her circumstances to her mind, brought down her mind to her circumstances." (Pulpit Commentary)

Boaz, a landowner of Bethlehem, was worthy because...

- He served the God of the Israelites.
- He was compassionate toward the poor.
- He was devout in his responsibilities of labor.
- He would only marry if one could be his wife, legally by God's law.
- He sought a wife with godly values.
- He honored Ruth.

Ruth and Boaz were worthy participants in marriage because first, as single people, they had demonstrated godly values and devotedness. It's important to note that if they had never gotten married they would have still had these traits. The traits did not begin because they got married.

In marriage, Ruth and Boaz parented the same values in their children and descendants, which included royalty: David, king of Israel!

When a worthy man and a worthy woman join in marriage, they will manifest strong faith in God, they will build each other up in relationship to God and to one another, and they will raise children with spiritual values which God holds as *royal!*

Be a Ruth or a Boaz. Be worthy!

Marriage is Designed by God

Introduction

Marriage is the foundation of society. Marriage between man and woman, as God powerfully designed it, is exactly what humanity needs. Marriage not only serves us, it serves God! We must participate in marriage, as God designed it, so it will be the blessing which God intended.

Discussion. Read Gen. 2:18-24; Rom. 7:1-3; 1st Cor. 7:1-5; Eph. 5:22-33

- 1. Reasons for Marriage.** Using the Scriptures listed above write God's wonderful reasons for marriage. _____

- 2. Marriage is sacred, a union which is priceless. It is a treasure which is gifted by God, which must be guarded for life.**

a. What is the "portion" mentioned in Eccl. 9:9? _____

b. How long does God require our marriage to last? (Matt. 19:6)

c. What is God's attitude towards divorce? (Malachi 2:16)

d. What value should we place on our marriage? _____

e. If it is destroyed, what is lost? _____

- 3. Marriage is a law, designed and approved by God! (Rom. 7:1-3)**

a. It is a law that does not exist for us until we enter our marriage.

b. Once we enter our marriage, our law, we are contracted to each other, exclusively! Malachi 2:14-16 says, "...she is your companion and your wife by covenant." A "covenant" is a more than an agreement, it is heartfelt with unsurpassed commitment. As God is in His covenant with us through Jesus Christ, we must be true to any covenant we enter, including marriage.

c. Write down why our law of marriage should be honored, respected, and obeyed...

- In respect to God: _____

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- In respect to spouse: _____

4. **What does “one” in marriage mean?** Write specific areas of life in which spouses are “one” in marriage. (Gen. 2:18-24; Rom. 7:1-3; 1st Cor. 7:1-5; Eph. 5:22-33)

In what areas of life, if any, are spouses independent; i.e. personal faith, individual benevolence? _____

5. **“Leave and hold fast to (join)” (Gen. 2:24).** This means to form a new family unit.

- Describe the ongoing relationship of the bride and groom with the parents of the bride and groom: such as how to establish independence from parents, yet how to honor them.

- What are the responsibilities of the newly formed family unit of the bride and groom? _____

Accomplishing The Mission of Marriage

Introduction

The primary mission: To draw closer to God and to each other every day, and to reflect God's Holy image. We will especially look at Abraham and Sarah, who are a strong Biblical example of a married couple who accomplished their mission. Keep in mind that they were married for about a century!

Before we begin with how to accomplish the mission of marriage, we must know that the ultimate goal of life is not marriage. It is Heaven! Although Jesus taught that spouses will not be married in Heaven (Matt. 22:30), married people should help each other get there!

Discussion. Keys to success are: Serve, Submit, Love, and Trust God and one another.

1. **Serve: Example of Abraham and Sarah. (1st Pet. 3:1-7; cf. Genesis 12-23)**

Abraham served Sarah.

- a. Honor your wife. She must be "*honored.*" He should be in *awe* of her. This means that the husband must treat his wife as the majesty (*honored one*) of the home. She is not faultless, but she must never be degraded, criticized, mocked, or treated as inferior. How can the husband show honor to his wife with words and actions?

- b. Value your wife. Care for her "*as a weaker vessel,*" not that she is weak— for she is not. This deals with the approach of the husband's care for his wife...regarding her as a delicate vase rather than as a wooden bowl. She is treated as the most priceless and the most protected member of the home. Write Proverbs 18:22 here.

How can a husband show care to preserve and protect his priceless treasure?

- c. Dwell with your wife with "*understanding.*" In other words, a man should study (research) her, learn to appreciate her, and treat her accordingly—not trying to re-invent her. He must work at understanding her needs: strengths, fears, or traits which may or may not clash with a husband's activity and mindset. How can he adjust himself to pleasantly dwell with her according to his "*understanding*" of her?

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d. What event(s) indicated that Sarah was not faultless?

Sarah served Abraham.

a. What was the goal of Sarah concerning her attitudes and disposition?

b. How did Sarah reverence her husband?

c. What event(s) demonstrated that Abraham was not faultless?

d. Who did Sarah trust more, and consider the higher power in her life: husband or God?

e. Describe a trying time in which Sarah had to endure hardship in her marriage?

2. Submit. How do spouses hold up the other's mission? (Eph. 5:21-33)

• The husband holds up the mission of the wife by:

• The wife holds up the mission of the husband by:

• Who has power (authority) over the wife's body (1st Cor. 7:1-5)?

Who has power over the husband's body? For what purpose does

each man have his own wife, and each wife have her own husband?

What will give opportunity for Satan to tempt husband or wife?

• How is the husband the head of the wife? (Eph. 5:21-33)

• Is a husband to relinquish this duty to the wife or others?

• How is being the "head" a role in which the husband serves the wife?

• How does the wife subject herself to her husband? (Eph. 5:21-33)

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- How will the wife submit even when a decision is not popular? _____

3. Love.

- a. Love God and one another (Matt. 22:34-40). Two people can make a marriage work if they love God more than anything else, and then love each other with devoted hearts.
- b. Read aloud 1st Cor. 13:4-7. Verbally substitute each one's name everywhere the text says "love." It has a profound effect.
- c. Commitment. To what extent does Jesus Christ love the church (*Christians*)? (Eph. 5:25-30) _____

- d. Is this love conditional or unconditional? _____
Describe a circumstance where love might be put to a test. _____

4. Trusting God (1st Pet. 3:7-12). This passage teaches that God is the center of the marriage. It is critical for each spouse to grow in faith.

- a. How much Bible reading do we purpose (together or individually)? _____

- b. How much prayer do we purpose together (outside of meals)? _____

- c. How will each work on good speech and good morals? _____

- d. How much must we each love God, in comparison to how much we love each other? (Matt. 10:34-39) _____

5. Trusting one another. (Gen. 2:21-24)

- a. As "one flesh," united with one another in the marriage mission, each spouse must unwaveringly trust the other in all of life.
- b. In marriage, who is our best friend (human) in all of life? _____
- c. Other than physical intimacy, in what areas of life must we exclusively trust each other? _____

- d. How will we earn trust from each other? (*for help, refer to page 4, "Worthy of Marriage"*) _____

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e. How will we show our trust for each other? _____

6. Forgive one another and bear with one another. Neither Abraham nor Sarah were faultless, and both required the blood of Jesus Christ, their descendant. Jesus offered himself *“for all”* (Hebrews 7:27), including Abraham and Sarah. Each got past their own sins by God’s forgiveness and they forgave each other as well.

a. Moving forward from sin requires forgiveness. Write Ephesians 4:32

b. Moving forward requires bearing with one another. Knowing that each spouse is a work in progress requires that we bear (share the burden of the journey). Forgiveness alone is not the whole stance. Patiently bearing with one another is necessary. Write Galatians 6:1-2

7. Accomplishing the Mission of Marriage. We can accomplish what we need to do and help our spouse accomplish what they need to do. We can build up our spouse, or we can break them down. For example, one may be disappointed in what their spouse has become at this point in the marriage: i.e. untrusting, unloving, defeated. This could be a result of what was constructed. Instead of building each other up, they broke each other down, thereupon despising the outcome. Specifically, describe what will we do to build up the other, thus accomplishing the mission of marriage.

For the husband: How will I build up my wife?

○ Spiritually: _____

○ Emotionally: _____

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○ Intellectually: _____

○ Physically: _____

For the wife: How will I build up my husband?

○ Spiritually: _____

○ Emotionally: _____

○ Intellectually: _____

○ Physically: _____

Agenda in Marriage

Introduction

Have a fruitful agenda! The primary agenda of too many married couples is earn, eat, and relax, in a repetitive cycle. Although needful and exciting, after years of this, the only accomplishment is that a couple has gotten older—and no meaningful growth has occurred. Married couples need an agenda which builds the relationship, blesses others, and produces spiritual fruit!

Discussion

1. **Communication.** How much, and when will we communicate with each other about our daily thoughts and tasks? _____

2. **Glorifying God.** How do we plan to glorify God in our marriage? Examples could be showing kindness to each other 24/7, or letting others know that God is why we have each other and the joys which relate to marriage. _____

3. **Prioritize each other, daily.** Making our spouse our top priority reaps incomparable results. This is taught in the expression, *“He who loves his wife loves himself.”* (Eph. 5:28). Daily, say, “You are my #1 agenda!” Our spouse is more important than our work, hobbies, and outside friendships. It may help to use the “Identity and Expectations” form in the back pocket you each filled out. What is our plan to prioritize each other?

Husband prioritizing for wife: _____

Wife prioritizing for husband: _____

4. **Location of our home.** Some couples struggle because of where they’ve landed geographically. Consider Abraham and Sarah’s drastic relocation, yet their marriage worked! Where on earth can we live and be functional in our relationship?

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5. **Helping others.** How will we practice “pure religion,” and not be self-centered (James 1:27; Romans 12:13)? For instance: reaching out to help the helpless, befriending the elderly, exercising hospitality to neighbors and strangers, spending Bible time with others ...especially those who are weak in faith or Bible knowledge or mentoring children who do not have strong parents. _____

6. **“Children are a heritage from the Lord.” (Psalm 127:1-5).** How many children do we desire: biological or adopted? _____

7. **How should children be raised, taught, and disciplined? (Psalm 78:1-4; Prov. 22:7; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Titus 2:1-8).** The goal of parenting is to bring children to a relationship with God!

a. Describe the basic roles of the father and the mother in parenting.

Father: _____

Mother: _____

b. How will the wife be a home keeper? (Titus 2:5; Prov. 31:10-31)

c. Describe the roles of the father and the mother in spiritual training.

Father: _____

Mother: _____

d. Describe the roles of the father and the mother in secular training.

Father: _____

Mother in spiritual training: _____

e. Why is it important to set a good example all the time?

f. Describe the roles of the father and the mother in corrective discipline.

Father: _____

Mother: _____

8. What other marriage building activities do we plan to do together (hobbies, visits, adventures)?

9. Develop financial goals. When you join hands in marriage you will have what you really need...each other. Admittedly, life requires that you manage material things which God created to serve you. A stronger relationship must always be the goal which guides each material opportunity. Never let an asset steal the joy of the relationship. Keep it spiritually focused. Keep material matters as simple as possible!

a. Summarize each passage.

Prov. 3:9-10 _____

1st Thess. 4:11-12 _____

1st Tim. 5:8 _____

Prov. 31:11 _____

b. Complete the following together. It's important that a husband and a wife share the ownership and the responsibility of material stewardship. In marriage it is "our money, our assets, our bills, and our debts, etc." No information should be withheld from the other. Use the example forms in the back of this booklet or your own forms or software to complete the following.

- Write financial goals: both spiritual and material
- List assets
- List monthly expenses
- List debts
- Complete a one-month budget with income and expenses

c. How will the budget build relationships with God, spouses, and children; rather than weaken relationships? Relate both how income will be gained and spent in order to support the relationships.

d. Write a plan for a successful financial decision process.

Write when and how much money is to be spent? _____

How often to have a budget meeting (i.e. monthly)? _____

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How can spouses arrive at an agreement regarding financial matters? _____

Set an amount when veto power can be invoked by either spouse regarding a purchase? In other words, at what dollar point is permission required by both spouses? _____

- e. Write a plan on when (if ever) and how much debt to take on? Keep in mind that the *"borrower is servant to the lender."* (Prov. 22:7) _____

How will you keep yourselves from unnecessary masters (debts)? _____

10. You owe it to God and to one another to care for your health. (1st Thess. 5:23)

- a. Who "owns" each body in marriage? (1st Cor. 6:19-20; 7:4) _____

- b. Why would diet or health be the business of one's spouse? For example, his dental procedure is not just *his*. It is *our* dental procedure.

- c. What is our plan for healthy meals and healthy physical activity?

Meals:

Physical activity:

10. A typical week.

- **Complete a schedule which incorporates your mission and your agenda.** See your responses on these two sections of the booklet.

<u>Sunday</u>

<u>Monday</u>

<u>Tuesday</u>

<u>Wednesday</u>

<u>Thursday</u>

<u>Friday</u>

<u>Saturday</u>

- **Identify monthly or yearly tasks that need to be scheduled?**

- Monthly _____

- Yearly _____

Addressing Challenges in Marriage

1. Decisions.

- a. How will we make decisions on critical matters? (*Consider faith in God, love, submission, trust, and prayers.*) _____

- b. What decisions will we allow the other to make, and support his/her judgment in those decisions? We must state whose tasks are whose, and who makes the decisions about their execution of those tasks? For instance, 1st Tim. 5:14 says she “manages the house,” another translation is “rules the house.” The husband must not micro-manage her realms of responsibility or vice-a-versa. One must honor and trust the other, without criticism of duties which are not their own.

2. Three common reasons for problems in marriage are: Religion, In-laws, and Money. How will we approach these potential problems?

- a. Religion: _____

- b. In-laws: _____

- c. Money: _____

3. Enemies of our marriage? How will we prevent and/or defeat these enemies?

- a. Selfishness: _____

- b. Adultery: _____

- c. Domineering spouse: _____

- d. Meddling by others: _____

- e. Worldliness i.e. drinking, gambling, pornography: _____

- f. Diversions like screen time (TV or electronic devices), hobbies, or outside friendships: _____

4. What should I do if I think he/she needs to change? (1st Pet. 3:1-7) From this passage it should be noted that first, each must lead by an example of godly conduct. The only person we can absolutely control is ourself. Spiritual growth and development of each one should occur. We should not incessantly lecture our disapproval of a spouse. No parenting/training/belittling of the other should take place. If an issue needs to be addressed, especially if it involves the safety of those in the home, it should be communicated with submission, love, and trust. If outside help is sought, both spouses need to attend. This Biblical pattern of dealing with differences helps a marriage to build each spouse up, rather than tearing them down. How will we communicate any issues so that all parties, spouses and God, are honored?

5. What is the Biblical Contingency for when we need a break? (1st Cor. 7:1-5)

- a. Agree to a specific time of separation, withholding yourselves from one another, a time given for fasting and prayer. Agree when to come back together. Fast and pray during the time of separation. Then come back together.
- b. If matters are unresolved, get help from counselors who are seasoned in faith and marriage: i.e. parents, elders, older married Christians, or marriage counselors. These are God's gifts for our success in marriage. Both spouses must attend.
- c. Divorce is not an option, except for sexual immorality; and even then spouses may be able to forgive and reconcile. (Matt. 19:3-12) Jesus' answer to the question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" was, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." In essence, Jesus' answer was, "No." We must fight for our marriage instead of fighting through a divorce.
- d. Many marriages end in divorce without any attempt for a "cooling off period," and without consulting counselors. This preempts God's powerful gifts from having a chance to reconcile the marriage.
- e. If we have one of those times where "we've had it," what will we do?

- f. What are the temptations which occur by not coming back together in intimacy?

Further Assignments

- 1. Together, visit at least one couple that has been married 40 years or more. Ask...**
 - “What is/are the key(s) to your lasting marriage?”
 - “What has been one of the greatest joys?”
 - “What was key to overcoming hurdles?”

2. After the marriage begins read the Song of Solomon in the Bible together.

3. Review and adjust “Our Marriage Plan” upon every anniversary.

4. Write Goals for the end of...

1 year _____

3 years _____

5 years _____

10 years _____

20 years _____

30 years _____

50 years _____

Eternal goals _____

Vows Preview

Example of Marriage Vows (You may write your own!)

“BRIDE and GROOM, you have studied God’s truths about sacred marriage, you desire the abundant blessings gained therein, and you desire to glorify God with your union. Now I ask you to face one another, join hands, and repeat these vows, which you thoughtfully and willingly make to God, and to each other.”

“I, GROOM, take you BRIDE, to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold, from this day forward, ---for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish 'till death do us part. My vow of faithful marriage is unto you, BRIDE, and it is unto God, through his Son Jesus Christ.”

“I, BRIDE, take you GROOM, to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, 'till death do us part. My vow of faithful marriage is unto you, GROOM, and it is unto God, through his Son Jesus Christ.”

Example of Ring exchange for BRIDE and GROOM

“GROOM, place the ring on her finger and repeat ..., ‘BRIDE, Please accept this ring as a symbol of my devotion, as I take you as my wife. Unto you I pledge myself, my name, all my goods, and all my heart, as long as we both shall live.”

“BRIDE, place the ring on his finger and repeat ..., ‘GROOM, Please accept this ring as a symbol of my devotion, as I take you as my husband. I accept your name, and I pledge myself, all my goods, and all my heart, as long as we both shall live.”

Financial Forms

Financial Goals List: Spiritual and Material
<i>Building our marriage relationship</i>
<i>Providing for ourselves</i>
<i>Spiritually nurturing our children</i>
<i>Supporting the Gospel</i>
<i>Caring for others who are needy</i>
<i>Other</i>

Assets Worksheet			
Date:			
Item	Value	Debt	Equity (Value minus Debt)
House			
Vehicle 1			
Vehicle 2			
Cash on Hand			
Checking			
Savings Emergency			
Savings Other			
Retirement			
Household items			
Jewelry			
Antiques			
Other			
TOTAL			

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Monthly Expenses (Give every available dollar a job!)			
Month _____, Year _____			
Description	Mo. Amount	<u>TOTALS</u>	
1. MONTHLY			
Giving (church, preaching, needy causes)			
Savings			
Housing - Rent/Mortgage/Taxes/Ins.			
Utilities: Electric, Water, Gas, Sewer, Trash			
Phone			
Vehicle Payment(s)/Replacement			
Vehicle Fuel			
Health Insurance			
Life Insurance			
Credit Cards/Loans -- Total Monthly Payments from Debts Worksheet			
Other			
TOTAL MONTHLY		→	
2. FREQUENTLY THROUGH THE MONTH		Mo. Amount	
Groceries			
Misc., Postage, Cleaning, etc.			
Gifts			
Clothing			
Personal Care/Hair			
Entertainment/Recreation			
Other			
TOTAL FREQUENTLY THROUGH THE MONTH		→	
3. NON-MONTHLY (bills not due every month, but money set aside monthly)			
	Amount Due ÷	Number of months	= Monthly Portion Budgeted
Vehicle maintenance and licensing			
Vehicle Insurance			
House Repairs, Maintenance			
House Taxes/Insurance (if not above)			
Medical: Co-pay, Doctors, Prescriptions			
Income taxes			
Vacation			
Other			
TOTAL NON-MONTHLY PORTION			→
MONTHLY EXPENSES TOTAL: ALL 3 CATAGORIES			

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Debts (Other than House Mortgage)					
Credit Cards/Loans.....					
<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Card/Loan Name</u>	<u>Number (last 4 digits)</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Monthly Pmt.</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Total Credit Cards/Loans-----			Total Balances	Total Mo. Pmts.	
Vehicle Loans					
<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Loan Company</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Monthly Pmt.</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Total Vehicles -----			Total Balances	Total Mo. Pmts.	

Monthly Budget: Revenue/Expense	
Year:	Month:
Revenue	
Wages, Salary (His)	
Wages, Salary (Hers)	
Other Income	
Total Revenue for Month	
Total Expenses for Mo. (from worksheet)	
Budget Summary: Revenue minus Expenses	
Balanced (\$0.00), Surplus (+), Shortfall (-)	

Name of person completing form: _____

Date of Completion: _____

Identity and Expectations

(After separately writing your answers, share them privately with each other.)

1. This is what I value most in life.

2. "I admire _____ (fiancé) because _____

3. I trust _____ (fiancé) with my life because _____

4. This is what I expect from marriage. _____

5. This is what my fiancé should rightfully expect from marriage. _____

6. This is what I think God has to do with our marriage. _____

7. What three things does _____ (fiancé) demonstrate are most important to him/her in life. _____

8. My fiancé's favorite things include...

After sharing your answers,
Replace this form in the back cover of the Engaged booklet.

Name of person completing form: _____

Date of Completion: _____

Identity and Expectations

(After separately writing your answers, share them privately with each other.)

1. This is what I value most in life.

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After sharing your answers,
Replace this form in the back cover of the Engaged booklet.