



## Lesson Overview

### 1. Freedom

What impact does being compelled have on you?

### 2. Read & Discuss

Discover what the New Church teaches about consent, proposal and betrothal. Discuss.

### New Church Concept Virginit

Virginit is a symbol of the sacredness of marriage; for after yielding her virginit the bride commits herself to the bridegroom, now her husband, and the bridegroom commits himself wholly to the bride, now his wife. Virginit is a token of conjugal love because it is a part of a covenant whose goal is that love may unite them into one. See *Conjugal Love* 503

# Betrothal

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 22 | Conjugal Love

## BrainBuilder

### Prenuptial Agreements

Sometimes a couple preparing to marry will sign a pre-nuptial agreement (prenup) — a binding legal document detailing each person's financial assets and what will happen to the assets should the marriage break up in future.

1. What are the advantages or disadvantages of writing a prenup?
2. Would you recommend a prenup to someone who is getting married? Why or why not?
3. What mindset might make someone take this step?

New Church teachings do not mention making agreements about worldly assets prior to marriage, however they do recommend couples making a spiritual commitment.

### Betrothal

*Conjugal Love* recommends that couples who have consented to marry bring their love to the Lord in a worship service called a betrothal. Couples may exchange tokens of their love—such as rings. Some couples celebrate their betrothal privately. Others invite family and close friends to share their joy. Although not legally binding like the commitment made during a wedding, promises made during a betrothal help a couple reflect and focus on deeper levels of friendship and love as they prepare for marriage. The Lord can bring about the marriage of a couple's spirits before they live together as husband and wife.

The souls of two unite when love for the opposite sex is confined to one of the sex—as happens when a young woman has pledged herself wholly to a young man and the young man conversely has pledged himself wholly to the young woman—and this is clearly apparent from the fact that their two lives unite, and so consequently their souls, because these are their life in its beginning. *Conjugal Love* 482

The Writings teach that the Lord can bring about the marriage of a couple's spirits before they begin living together as husband and wife. The marriage of the spirit is an important spiritual marriage foundation that can most easily take place before partners express their love physically.

By betrothal each is made ready for conjugal love.... By the order engraved on it, truly conjugal love ascends and descends. It ascends from its first warmth upward toward people's souls in an effort to form conjunctions there, and this by continually more interior openings of their minds. There is,

moreover, no love which strives for these openings more intensely, or which opens the interior recesses of minds more forcefully and adeptly, than conjugal love; for it is the soul in each which impels it. On the other hand, in the same moments that this love ascends toward the soul, it also descends toward the body and invests itself in it. People should know, however, that conjugal love is of the same character in its descent as it is in the height to which it ascends. If it soars aloft, it descends chaste; but if it does not soar aloft, it descends unchaste. See *Conjugal Love* 302

When a couple is sexually intimate their relationship focuses on a physical level of communication, and preparation for the deeper levels of marriage—the free sharing of values and ideas—does not happen. Consequently *Conjugal Love* states:

During the time of betrothal it is not lawful to be joined physically [in sexual intercourse]. For if they joined physically the order engraved on conjugal love perishes. *Conjugal Love* 305

Focusing on spiritual qualities and healthy friendship during the time of betrothal draws a couple's souls together and provides a strong foundation for their marriage.

The Lord tells us this is the ideal way to prepare for marriage because He wants us to have the happiness of true marriage love. Premarital sex can have a negative spiritual effect on the quality of a future marriage. When we make “detours” from the ideal path we complicate the process, but the Lord gives us the opportunity to try again in each new situation. He says,

No love can ever become pure in human beings, nor in angels. So neither can conjugal love. But because the Lord primarily regards the intention that is in the will, therefore to the extent that a person has the intention and perseveres in it, to that extent he is introduced into the purity and holiness of conjugal love, and gradually makes progress in it. *Conjugal Love* 71.2

A person's efforts to cooperate with what the Lord teaches about the foundations of conjugal love pave the way to receiving the blessings the Lord intends.

## Discussion

*Choose questions for discussion.*

1. Have you witnessed a betrothal? What was it like?
2. In what ways might a betrothal ceremony help a couple prepare for marriage?
3. What are the spiritual benefits of waiting to be physically intimate until after a wedding ceremony?
4. Many people make mistakes. Can conjugal love ever be completely pure?
5. What are the top three things you would like your future husband or wife to bring to your marriage?
6. What are the top three things you would like to offer the person that you want to be your eternal partner?
7. How might standing up for your values affect your relationships with others?

## New Church Concepts Betrothal

The souls of two unite when love for the opposite sex is confined to one of the sex—as happens when a woman has pledged herself wholly to a young man and the man conversely has pledged himself wholly to the woman—and this is clearly apparent from the fact that their two lives unite, and so consequently their souls, because these are their life in its beginning. From this union of souls, where it exists in its spiritual holiness and purity, conjugal love flows down into the life of the entire body and fills it with blessed delights, so long as its course remains open, as is the case in people who from the Lord become spiritual. *Conjugal Love* 482

## Pre-marital Sex

Pre-marital sex is light in the measure that it looks to conjugal love for the reason that the person then looks, from the unchaste state in which he is, toward a chaste state. Moreover, to the extent that he prefers the chaste state, he is to that extent also in it in regard to his intellect; and to the extent that he not only prefers it, but also values it more, he is in it as well in regard to his will and so in regard to his inner self. See *Conjugal Love* 452.2