

Pre-Martial Counseling, Session One



Introduction:

A) Rules

- 1) What we say here stays here
- 2) Tell me only what you trust me to keep
- 3) We have a right to all of our feelings
- 4) You can quit talking at any time you want
- 5) I am going to suggest things but you have the final decision on your actions

I. The purpose of Pre-Martial counseling.

A) Not:

1. To decide if you should get married
2. To try to talk you out of getting married
3. To tell you what you should do
4. To tell you how to live your life

B) Purpose:

1. To get to know you better
2. To raise questions that I believe are important
3. To give you the opportunity to discuss at least one thing that would not have discussed had we not talked

C) The cost of Pre-Martial Counseling

1. Counseling is free
 - a. Part of my reward for being a minister
 - b. If the counseling is helpful consider it your wedding present
 - c. If it is not then you got what you paid for

II. Get acquainted

A) How long have you been together?

B) What kind of dates have you had

C) Why are you being married by a minister instead of a Justice of the Peace?

D) In the event of serious problems, will you promise to seek help to work out your problems before you call a lawyer?

E) What is your definition of Marriage?

F) How were feelings of love, warmth, and tenderness showing in your home when you were growing up?

G) How do you want these feelings expressed in your home?

H) What fears do you have as you enter marriage?

I) What can you do to help your partner with their fears?

J) Describe yourself 10, 20, and 50 years from your wedding day

K) Why would it be important to set goals?

III. Family Rules Introduction

What Were Your Rules?

"Family rules" or norms are "the way we do things in our family." Often they are unconscious, rarely mentioned, seldom decided by discussion. Different families have different rules. When a couple is married, the different family rules conflict. Family rules often become more

important than the Bible-even in strong Christian families. These norms are often elevated to God's truth. They are not just the "way we did things in our family," but that is the way things "ought to be done."

Think about your home when you were growing up. What were your "family roles?" They were probably not stated as rules, but everyone in the family knew "that is the way we do things."

ROLES - What was "women's work?" What was "men's work?"

TIME - What was your family's role for being on time? How was this applied to work, school, and church? How was this applied to curfew?

MONEY - How was money managed and spent? Who decided on the use of money? How did money reveal what was important in your family?

SPIRITUALITY - How important was God in your family? How was this expressed in worship, Bible study, use of time and money? Who was the spiritual leader of your family?

HOLIDAYS - How did your family celebrate Thanksgiving? How did your family celebrate birthdays, family reunions and how did you observe these?

DRESS - What were the dress codes in your family? What dress was preferred for church, school, public, in the house?

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO - What were your family rules in relation to the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco?

AUTHORITY - How did your family view people in authority such as police, public Officials, elders?

CHILDREN - How were children valued - were they center of family, burdens, blessings, inconveniences? What speaking privileges did children have? How were children taught and corrected? How were different children treated?

PETS - What kind of pets did your family have? How many pets did you have? Where did they stay? Where did they eat? Where did they sleep?

CONFLICT - How did your family handle conflict? What was considered "fighting fair?" What would have been considered "not fighting fair?" With whom could you disagree? With whom could you not disagree? What topics could not be discussed?

FAMILY SECRETS - What were some family secrets that your family had that were not to be discussed with people outside the family? What were some family secrets that your family had that you knew about but were not to be discussed-even in the family?

FEELINGS - SADNESS, JOY, FEAR, ANGER- What feelings were acceptable to have and to express? What feelings were unacceptable and not to be discussed?

OTHER RULES - What other roles did your family have?

CHANGE OF RULES-Were your family rules ever changed? What was the occasion for the change and how was it done?

Homework:

A) Every time we meet I will give you some homework to be completed before we meet again. We will discuss your answers together at our next session.

B) If at all possible do your homework when you are alone, unless I ask you to do it together.

C) Please be honest with yourself and each other. This is the only way that these sessions will be successful. It is also a great trait to take into your marriage.

D) Spiritual Goals

1) We are starting with the most important first.

2) Where do you want to grow to be spiritually?

3) If you refuse to plan then you won't grow.

F) Marriage Success Index

Spiritual Goals

The main goal in this area of my life is _____

In order to reach this goal, I am setting the following objectives:

Year 1, _____

Year 5, _____

Year 10, _____

Year 25, _____

Year 50, _____

*Since you were raised from the dead with Christ, aim at what is in heaven, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Think only about the things in heaven, not the things on earth.
(Colossians 3:1,2)*

MARRIAGE SUCCESS INDEX

Answer each question "yes or "no". Your first spontaneous answer is more apt to be correct than one you put down after a period of thinking.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Does he (she) try to improve you? | Yes | No |
| 2. Do you agree on whether you want children? | Yes | No |
| 3. Are you dissatisfied with yourself? | Yes | No |
| 4. Do you feel that you will be able to contribute to his (her) happiness? | Yes | No |
| 5. Is he (she) untruthful? | Yes | No |
| 6. Do you have similar attitudes towards drinking? | Yes | No |
| 7. Do you feel that he (she) is narrow minded? | Yes | No |
| 8. Are you able to talk over with him (her) the problems that come up between you? | Yes | No |
| 9. Do the opinions of your friends in reference to him (her) have much effect on you? | Yes | No |
| 10. Are you patient and understanding? | Yes | No |
| 11. Do you feel that his (her) parents disapprove of you? | Yes | No |
| 12. Does he (she) confide in you? | Yes | No |
| 13. Is he (she) the first boy (girl) friend you ever had? | Yes | No |
| 14. Do you enjoy life? | Yes | No |
| 15. Do you ever wish you had not become engaged? | Yes | No |
| 16. Are you satisfied with the amount of affection he (she) shows you? | Yes | No |
| 17. Is he (she) bored when you tell him things that happen in your everyday job? | Yes | No |
| 18. Do you both agree on whether or not a wife have an outside job? | Yes | No |
| 19. Do you feel that he (she) lacks enough ambition? | Yes | No |
| 20. Were his (her) parents happily married? | Yes | No |
| 21. Is he (she) tight with money? | Yes | No |
| 22. Were your parents happily married? | Yes | No |
| 23. Is he (she) easily influenced by others? | Yes | No |
| 24. Are you satisfied with him (her) as he (she) is? | Yes | No |
| 25. Are you bored when he (she) tells you of the routine of his (her) day's work? | Yes | No |
| 26. Do you confide in him (her)? | Yes | No |

27. Does he (she) have annoying habits or mannerisms?	Yes	No
28. Do you have similar intellectual interests?	Yes	No
29. Were your earlier relationships unsatisfactory?	Yes	No
30. Do you have similar educational backgrounds?	Yes	No
31. Is he (she) jealous?	Yes	No
32. Do you feel that you know him (her) pretty well?	Yes	No
33. Is he (she) irritable?	Yes	No
34. Do you have similar religious beliefs?	Yes	No
35. Have you ever considered breaking your engagement?	Yes	No
36. Do you have similar respect for convictions? (drinking, religion, sex, ethics, etc.)	Yes	No
37. Is he (she) stubborn?	Yes	No
38. Do you love him (her) just as much when you are away from him (her) as when you are near him (her)?	Yes	No
39. Do you feel a little uneasy with him (her)?	Yes	No
40. Do you believe that the marriage is likely to be a success?	Yes	No
41. Do you sometimes wonder if he (she) is really interested in you?	Yes	No
42. Does he (she) have a sense of humor?	Yes	No
43. Do you feel that you could just talk for hours without the TV, radio, or computer?	Yes	No
44. Do you consider yourself to be a thoughtful and kind person?	Yes	No
45. Do you feel that the responsibility for your relationship rests mainly on you?	Yes	No
46. Do you show that you are affectionate?	Yes	No
47. Do you wonder if he (she) understands you?	Yes	No
48. Does he (she) seem to know how you feel about things in general?	Yes	No
49. Is he (she) pretty much responsible for your relationship?	Yes	No
50. Do you understand how he (she) feels about things?	Yes	No