

**For This Reason . . .
And They Shall Become One . . .**



*A Guide to Building
A Biblically-based Marriage*

. . . They shall become one . . .
(Gen 2:24)

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Preface:

The following is a complete program for premarital counselling. It consists of Seven Sessions, each session lasting for approximately 90 minutes. The material can be covered with one couple or multiple couples simultaneously. In the program, the couple(s) will be required to complete some assignments before each session. They will study the biblical texts and interact with them as a couple, focusing on the implications of the material for their marriage. They will also need to fill out some questionnaires, forms and complete one major Bible Study. By the end of the program, the couple will have a comprehensive view of the Christian concept of marriage and be better prepared to start their new life together with God as an indispensable Senior Partner.

The material was designed so that it can easily be modified and be used in a marriage enrichment seminar. Using the texts and questions in each session, it can also be used in a Family Bible Study or a Sunday School.

Sources: Pre-Marital Counselling Program Resources

- *The Bible*
- Wangerin, Walter As *For Me and My House*
- Balswick & Balswick, *The Family: The Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*
- Eyrich, Howard A., *Three to Get Ready*
- Trent & Smalley, *The Two Sides of Love & Video Series: Loving lasting Relationships*

Scope: Topics to Cover

- Knowing self and each other
- Marriage
- Covenants vs. Contracts. The meaning of the vow
- Forgiveness
- The Character of Sacrificial Love
- Companionship & Complementarity (complementing each other)
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution/Management
- Sexuality & Intimacy
- Gender Roles and Differences
- Family Sub-Cultures (Diagram)
- Personality Traits/Temperaments
- Marriage Ceremony and Reception

The following additional topics will be covered, but on only in the reviewing of the couple's assignments:

- Family Planning: Children, Birth Control, etc.
- Finance
- Family Worship and Church Affiliations
- Family and Social Concerns
- Living Accommodations

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Introduction:

The Theology for Pre-Marital counselling

God instituted marriage. He has a purpose, a plan and principles through which the relationship should be fleshed out. Marriage is a permanent relationship and was given for the partnership of the man and woman, for their pleasure, for procreation and the propagation of the human race and for protection of society (Gen 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 1 Thes 4:3-8).

Man** is sinful and in need of grace and forgiveness. Without experiencing the forgiveness of God, he can not be forgiven or forgive others. The Scriptures provide the pattern and resources for forgiveness. Marriage is the most demanding “I-thou” relationship which man may ever know, but it is also the most intimate human relationship he can ever be involved in. Because of the desire and need for intimacy and the sinfulness of man, forgiveness is essential. Forgiveness can only be found in Christ. Hence, the couple needs Him.

The task of the pastor is to shepherd the flock. The Good Shepherd “leads them out,” goes before them, feeds and guides them, protects them and even lays down His life for them (Jn 10). The under-shepherd needs to do the same. He needs to guide the young couple in the exploration of and the practical applications of the biblical principles as they pertain to marriage. Similar to the Chief Shepherd, he needs to guide them in “the paths of righteousness” (Ps 23:3). He needs to equip them to live the life and do the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-16). If he truly loves the Good, Great and Chief Shepherd, he will tend the sheep and feed the lambs (Jn 21:15-23, cf. Acts 20:28).

It is the stewardship responsibility of the pastor to be involved in premarital counselling. By initially investing in the lives of the couples in the congregation, he is saving time and trouble in the future. Premarital counselling is “redeeming the time” and equipping couples so that they can live productive lives and minister to others. Hence, healthy marriages can have missionary implications and facilitate missions.

Three kinds of work the pastor should be involved in:

1. Preparing and preventing
2. Redeeming and repairing
3. Developing and maintaining

Pre-marital counselling is one of the primary ways of achieving the above as they apply to marriage and the family.

*** I am not into political correctness. When the words “man” and “he” (singular) are used, unless it refers to the opposite of the feminine gender, I am using them to mean “human beings or humanity”. Which one is meant will be patently clear for the context.*

The Purpose of Premarital Counselling:

To cultivate an appreciation for the nature of man and of marriage and to teach the couple how to apply God's Word to the various situations that would arise out of their relationship. It equips them to live victoriously and fruitfully East of Eden.

The Scriptural Basis of Premarital Counselling:

The Scriptures provide an adequate basis for premarital counselling. Psychology and the other disciplines are useful, but only as providing tools and methodologies to apply the principles of the Originator and Sustainer of marriages and family. Only the Scriptures provide a solution for man's basic problem - sin. Sin is the basic cause of the dysfunctionalities in all relationships.

The Model for Premarital Counselling

Wangerin and the Balswicks, together, give us a viable model for premarital counselling. We need to deal with Covenants, Grace, Empowerment and Intimacy (Balswick). We need the foundation and tool of forgiveness, as we focus on truthfulness and dependability, sharing in the work of survival (labouring), talking, listening, loving, healing, gifting and volunteering (Wangerin). Premarital counselling is demanding and time-consuming. If done properly, however, the time spent, is well invested. It will yield multiple dividends in the future in many areas.