

Marriage Counselling Format

Two Session Pre-Wedding Counsel

Session 1: Marriage

- Give pen and paper

1. God's Blessing in a Marriage

Genesis 2:18 — And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Proverbs 18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Ecclesiastes 4: — 9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

- (Three-fold Cord) God and You and You
- Seriousness of the Wedding Vow, Vow not a mistake

Ecclesiastes 5:6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

- "She's Your wife" / "He's Your Husband"

Malachi 2:14,15 14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

- "Take Head to your spirit"

Ephesians 5:22-33 — Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

- (Like hurting your ownself to hurt him/her.)

2. Solid Advice

- In Engagement, If you need to then test each other, after --- NEVER!!! The marriage is not a foregone conclusion yet.
- Love is a Choice
 - A PLAN TO LOVE EACH OTHER AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER
 - Real love is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person.
 - (lust isn't always a choice, physical attraction)
- Commit to Work
 - Commit to always work at relationship ... Study
 - Discover and remember the things that bring you together as well as the things that pull you apart
 - Practice to always be Tender .. I love you and thank you
 - Continue to "Date" - create special moments
- Someone has to say I'm sorry
- Communication don't assume
- Enough in life will erode and whittle away at your relationship, never bad mouth
- Common vision and interests - you don't have to like all the same things to have a good marriage - pay attention to the things that pull you apart even in small measures and the things that bring you a little bit closer together.

3. Pre-Marriage Questions

- Why Do You Want to Get Married?
 - Marriage is no longer the preeminent way that adults organize their lives. Why are you?
- Are you right for each other?
- What does MARRIAGE mean to you?
 - outmoded institution, or, at best, a necessary evil
- Amos 3:3 — Can two walk together, except they be agreed?
 - What's your strategy for disagreements?
- What do you think of the Will of God? Is it discernable? How?
- What do you think of the Bible? Its Doctrines concerning discipline in the home? Speech? Leadership? Child raising? Authority of the Bible? God?
- Is there something you've been too nervous to ask each other about? (i.e., previous relationships)
- What are YOUR expectations concerning:
 - Church? Where? How Often? How Important in Priority?
 - Children? Soon? Later? At All? How Many? Would You Consider Adoption and/or Fostering? Etc.
 - Sex: Frequency? Initiating? Not in the mood? Birth Control? For or Against. Is there such a thing as an unwanted pregnancy?
 - Christian Ministry
 - Finances, Budgeting, Bills, Roles, Responsibility, Who MANAGES the money? How much can you spend without your spouses approval?
 - Work: "Fun" balance? Will Both work? Schedules? What about in the case of children? Child care?
 - Holidays: Whose Family?
 - Home: location now? location 5 years from now? Value? "Niceness" importance?
 - Social Life: Best friends and managing other relationships, "out with the guys/girls", Husband having "girl" friends and visa-versa

- What is Your Concept of Your Role in the Marriage and Your Spouses Role?
 - How will you divide the roles and responsibilities in your relationship?
 - Who will do the house work?
 - Cook?
 - Who will mow the lawn?
 - When something breaks in the home, car, etc.
 - Who will discipline the kids? Both?
 - Who will "Stay home" with the children? (Share a childhood experience with each other)
 - When you can't compromise, who decides? The HEAD.
- Unfaithfulness - Infidelity? How do you define it? How/Can/Will You recover? Preventative Measures? How willing are you to ASK for HELP?

4. Marriage is Difficult to do Well

a. Tension on Personal Self-Fulfillment ("my happiness")

- Be Complete and Whole in yourself
- Stress is Put on your Relationship when you are acting "too needy".
- a successful marriage impels individuals to grow along multiple dimensions.

b. What will happen when the tension created by your "economic union" (To consolidate income, provide emotional sustenance, and offer a secure setting in which children can grow, etc.) is out of balance and it is no longer "financially smart" to be married?

- all happy marriages are not alike

c. Marriage is an intense relationship and inevitably is often an arena for conflicts over power and authority. Highly "romanticized" notions of togetherness, bonding, and soul mates joined together fade in the everyday conflicts that pervade married life.

- ships passing in the night?
- spend surprisingly little time together ("companionship")
- career demands

d. Tension created by ever escalating expectations attached to marriage and the erosion of the supports that helped sustain marriages in the past.

- Marriage, more than ever before, has become a risky endeavor, more fraught and fragile than ever.
- Family Supports: including extended kinship relations and friendships rooted in geographical proximity.
- Marriage can become overtime a lonely life raft in a storm-tossed sea if you allow yourselves to become isolated.
- Marrying each other's families.

5. Next Session Prep

- Will there be others Involved in Meeting?

- When?

Session 2: Wedding

- Have you gotten a marriage license?
- Desired Length of Overall Ceremony & Sermon?
- Wedding Vows?
 - Write Your Own
 - Traditional Set
 - Customized by Preacher (Voice: "Traditional/Formal" or more Informal "Marriage" "Holy Matrimony")
- What is my Role as you view it in the ceremony?
 - Will Others Be involved?
 - Will I conduct the ceremony as a whole or will others give direction?

Order of Wedding Ceremony

General Order

1. Music plays While guests arrive
2. People are Greeted, Ceremony Started, Wedding Party Gathered
3. Participation/Singing/Speeches/Slideshow, etc.
4. The Giving in Marriage ("Who Gives This....")
5. Wedding Sermon: (Gospel Presentation, Challenge to Those Gathered, Challenge to _____ and _____)
6. Wedding Vows
7. Symbolism, Presentations, etc.
8. Exchanging of Wedding Rings
9. Blessing
10. Pronouncement
11. Announcements

Details

1. Music plays While guests arrive

----->(What will be my CUE to Greet the People?)

2. Greeting (Welcome, Prayer) Family and Friends, we are gathered here today in the presence of God as witnesses to the joining of _____ and _____ in marriage.

Marriage is honorable before God and a holy institution; and so is not to be entered into lightly but with reverence. Into this SACRED TRUST these two people now come to be joined.

-----> Do you want the Following Integrated?

If any person can show just cause why they may not be joined together - let them speak now or forever hold their peace.

3. Participation/Singing/Speeches/Slideshow, etc.

Example:

A Friend wrote a special song for _____ and will now sing it to her.

4. The Giving in Marriage

Who gives this woman to be wed to this man?

5. Wedding Sermon [GOSPEL PRESENTATION, Challenge to Couple]

-----> What would you like to be said?

a. [GOSPEL PRESENTATION]

_____ and _____ share a common faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This relationship with Christ is central to their relationship with each other. This will be a faithful and enduring foundation for the life they are building together.

They would like you to know Jesus as they do. All of us are born with a sin problem, missing our holy purpose. Sin weighs us down, defeats our dreams and separates us from God who is the creator of every good thing. Romans 6:23--For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. You do not have to go another day at odds with God. Salvation is God's free gift and Jesus will be your faithful Guide and Anchor. If you have any questions at all, please take someone aside (_____ and _____, myself and many other Believers present today) and just ask "TELL ME MORE."

b. [WEDDING CHALLENGE]

_____ and _____, by the help of God, I will challenge you briefly from Genesis 2 & Genesis 29. In both of these passages, we find the saying "Bone of my Bone" and "Flesh of My Flesh". In Genesis 2, God had completed creating many magnificent creatures, Adam spent much time with them all naming each one, but Adam was still ALONE. God recognized this as a BAD THING. While he is asleep, God performs surgery on Adam and takes out a rib, from which God forms Eve. Adam responds by saying "THIS is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." In Genesis 29, Jacob was homeless and in the lowest point of his life. His brother hated him and so he is no the run. He meets Rachel at well, who leave him standing -- probably nervous about bringing some stranger home to dad. But when her dad heard about Jacob, Laban ran full speed to great Jacob, "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh." and Jacob didn't have to sleep outside that night.

THE CREDIT OF DESIGN goes entirely to God. God puts people together. He builds the families, he imparts the love, he ordains the times and seasons.

But the Beautiful Union, you enter into today would never happen until you RECOGNIZED each other.

ALWAYS RECOGNIZE its GOD's DESIGN that brought you together and it will be your continued and MUTUAL commitment to his WILL that will KEEP you together. ALWAYS RECOGNIZE you are peers and equals in the most unequal of ways. _____ you are responsible to lead as the spiritual head of your home. _____ you are responsible for the spiritual direction your home will take. Your very testimony of Godly living will sanctify your home. Finally, ALWAYS RECOGNIZE you belong to each other. Each other's needs, wants, dreams, problems, issues, concerns. You share it all in common.

Odds are there will challenges ahead, but always run toward each other, "Surely, thou art my bone and my flesh."

6. **Wedding Vows** [_____ will make his vows to SEBRINA first.] Marriage is an institution ordained by God and so is not to be entered into lightly, but after much consideration. _____ will you make your pledge to _____, before God and these witnesses? [I WILL] [I WILL LEAD _____.] I, _____, take you _____, to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, keeping myself solely unto you for as long as we both shall live

_____ will you make your pledge to _____, before God and these witnesses? [_____ will make her personal vow to _____.] I, _____ take you _____, to be my lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, keeping myself solely unto you for as long as we both shall live

7. Symbolism, Presentations, etc.

- Example: While someone singing, _____ and _____ poured to colors of sand into a container of gray sand. While preacher explains the symbolism: As a symbol of their two lives becoming one, _____ and _____ will add the two colors of their lives to a gray foundation already poured which is God.

8. Exchanging of Wedding Rings

(A Customized "With This ring I thee Wed.")

[Give _____ the ring. _____ starts the ring at the end of _____ 's Left ring finger.]

I give you this ring as an eternal symbol and pledge of my love and commitment and devotion. With this ring I thee wed. [Give _____ the ring. _____ starts the ring at the end of _____ 's Left ring finger.]

I give you this ring as an eternal symbol and pledge of my love and commitment and devotion. With this ring I thee wed.

9. BLESSING

[_____ will pray for God's blessing on the couple]

"Let us pray ..."

10. Pronouncement and Introduction

Preacher announces:

By the power vested in me by the call of Almighty God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

You may now kiss the bride.

Introduction (exit) It is now my pleasure to present for the first time as husband and wife, _____ and - _____.

[Congregation applauds, recessional begins and if they haven't already, PREACHER motions for everyone to rise.]

WAIT FOR WEDDING PARTY TO BE GONE ...

11. Announcements

What are they? Who will give?

Examples: -- No Parking on Grass, Limited Parking, DEFER TO ELDERLY and those with Physical Limitations -- MEN: 100 Chairs Brought Up , Billy Mcalip Will direct in the barn