
Premarital Counseling Manual



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Premarital Counseling Manual

Table of Contents

Session 1.....Expectations and General Information

Reasons for Marriage

Session 2.....Uniqueness & Acceptance in Marriage—Part I

Love is a Basis for Marriage—Part II

Session 3.....Marital Expectations

Marriage Anticipation Questions

Session 4.....Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision Making

In-Laws

Session 5.....Communication

Resolving Conflict

Session 6.....Finances

Session 7.....Divorce and Remarriage

Pastoral Care Premarital Counseling Sessions

Premarital Classes

<p style="text-align: center;">First Session</p>	<p>Expectations and General Information</p> <p>Reasons for Marriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself and purpose of sessions Determine Number of Sessions Needed • Materials Required <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laws of Marriage—tape series 2. Roles/Responsibility of Husband and Wife—tape series 3. <u>Five Love Languages</u> by Gary Chapman—book 4. <u>His Needs Her Needs</u>— by Willard E. Harley book • If the couple has kids coming into the marriage <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who's the Boss—The Blended Family (tapes) 2. Trouble in the House—Unequally Yoked (tapes) • Finances <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For one month, write down everything you spend. 2. Do a budget. The budgets are to see where you stand financially. • The sessions are encouraged to be 3-4 weeks apart. • Begin Session One
<p style="text-align: center;">Second Session</p>	<p>Uniqueness and Acceptance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the Outline • At the end of the second session <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide couple with homework assignment 2. Encourage couple to bring back handout (Marriage Anticipation Questions) 3. On the back, make a list of things you would expect from your spouse.
<p style="text-align: center;">Third Session</p>	<p>Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Outline • Go over homework assignment • Provide feedback based on information provided • Encourage them to listen to the Roles, Responsibility, and Decision-making tape.

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Pastoral Care Premarital Counseling Sessions

Premarital Classes

Fourth Session	Roles, Responsibility, and Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the outline and Roles and Responsibility worksheet <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indicate to the couple that they are DYING TO SELF 2. Emphasize him loving his wife and taking care of the family—The Provider 3. Emphasize to her and explain true submission/they are working together.
Fifth Session	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the outline
Sixth Session	Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow outline • Provide feedback based on information provided. • If this is the last session, reveal to the couple potential challenges (if you observed any.) • Encourage them to get these tapes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems in Marriage 2. Meeting Sexual Needs—Wife/Husband
Seventh Session	Divorce and Re-Marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow provided outline • Discuss the blended family tape.

Note: Maybe times you will need to talk to the couple individually.



Premarital Counseling Form

Prospective Groom	Prospective Bride
Name:	Name:
Home Phone:	Home Phone:
Work Phone:	Work Phone:
Cell Phone:	Cell Phone:
Member: Yes ___ No ___	Member: Yes ___ No ___
If yes, How Long? Years ___ Months ___	If yes, How Long? Years ___ Months ___
If no, where's membership?	If no, where's membership?
Married before? Yes ___ No ___	Married before? Yes ___ No ___
How many times?	How many times?
How long have you been divorced?	How long have you been divorced?
How many children do you have?	How many children do you have?
Number of male ___ Number of female ___	Number of male ___ Number of female ___
Ages:	Ages:
How long have you known each other? Years ___ Months ___	How long have you been dating? Years ___ Months ___
Have you set a wedding date? Yes ___ No ___	If yes, when?

Sessions Completed	Date Completed
Reasons for Marriage	
Uniqueness and Acceptance in Marriage	
What Do You Expect from Marriage?	
Roles/Responsibilities and Decision Making	
Communication	
Finances	
Divorce and Remarriage	

Comments/Notes/Additional Sessions Recommended

Date	Comment

Signature of Counseling Minister _____ Date _____

Session One – Reasons for Marriage



Introduction

There are many reasons for marriage and motivating factors for marriage. The purpose of this session is to explore some of the possible reasons and motivations.

Exercise—On a separate sheet of paper, list three reasons why you are marrying your fiancé. After you have done that, list the three reasons why you think your fiancé is marrying you. Then share the results.

I. Unhealthy Reasons for Marriage

1. Loneliness—fear of being a bachelor or an “old maid.”
2. Marrying on the Rebound—You were hurt in a former love relationship and to ease the hurt, you immediately choose another.
3. Your fiancée is pregnant.
4. You have had sex.
5. To spite or get back at your parents
6. Appearance
7. Economics

Question: Are any of these things a reason for your decision?

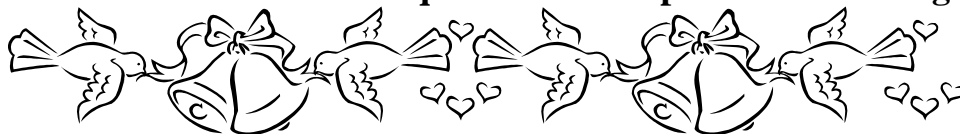
II. Positive Reasons for Marriage

1. Companionship
2. Love
3. Because you are convinced that it is God’s will for you to marry this person
4. To fulfill sexual needs in the way God intends

Personal Notes

- The couple must listen to the audiotape “God’s Viewpoint on Marriage” before the first session.
- Ask if they have any questions regarding the tape.

Session Two-Part 1 – Uniqueness & Acceptance in Marriage



Opening Statement

Your partner is not you! He or she is other, created in God's image—not yours. He or she has a right to be other, to be treated or respected as other.

Introduction—If you plan to marry, it is certain that you have a pre-conceived fantasy of your ideal mate or the perfect marriage. After a while, you will begin to realize that your fantasy and the person you have married will begin to diverge sharply. At that point, you may embark upon a reform program, forgetting that only God can make a tree. You misconstrued the words of the wedding ceremony “and the two shall become one” to mean that your mate should become like you and your fantasy. The oneness in marriage is not similarity or sameness in matters relating to ideas or feelings, but to the oneness of understanding.

Exercise Handout #1

Instructions: Have each one complete this separately then discuss. Have copies made in advance. Give them five (5) minutes to complete.

Conclusion

It is important to remember that one of the main motivating factors toward marriage is the person's need to feel complete because of what the other person has to offer. Consciously or unconsciously, people choose others who help them feel complete.

MARRIAGE MANUAL

Session #2

Handout

Uniqueness and Acceptance in Marriage

SIMILARITIES

How are my fiancé and I similar?

DIFFERENCES

How are my fiancé and I different?

EFFECT

How can these differences or similarities complement one another in our marriage?

Session Two—Part 2—Love is a Basis for Marriage



Opening

Most couples say they are marrying because they love their fiancé. Let's assume that in this society, in order to obtain a license, you had to convince a jury that you really love the other person.

Exercise: Write three (3) facts you would present to prove your case. Include in this your definition of love.

Instructions: Promote dialogue and discussion during this exercise.

What is Love?

1. Love is a feeling you feel when you get a feeling you've never felt before.
2. To love somebody is not just a strong feeling—it is a decision. It is a judgment. It is a promise.
3. Love is an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person.

Marriage Needs Three Types of Love

1. Eros—seeks sensual expression—romantic; sexual
2. Philia—friendship which includes companionship, communication, and cooperation.
3. Agape—unconditional, self-giving, forgiving

Note

- Agape love is not just something that happens; it is something you make happen.
- Agape love is kind, sympathetic, thoughtful, and sensitive to the needs of the other.

Both of you must make a quality decision to embrace all three of these in order to have a good, happy marriage.

Exercise

Handout #2—When you are married, what can you do to demonstrate these three kinds of love? Write at least three examples under each category.

Note: Have the couple do this independently. Go over it and discuss.

Conclusion Your love will either live or die. What kills love?

1. A failure to spend time alone together doing things you both enjoy.
2. A failure to reinforce appropriate behavior in each other. For example: smiling, complementing, spending time together alone, showing compassion.

Question: What do you do now to reinforce the appropriate behavior in each other?

Note: Assignment for next session 1) Complete list of expectations 2) Complete Marriage Anticipation questions

MARRIAGE MANUAL

Session #2

Handout #2

THREE KINDS OF LOVE

EROS	PHILIA	AGAPE
Romantic, Sexual	Friendship (includes companionship, communication, cooperation)	Self-giving, unconditional, forgiving

Session Three—Marital Expectations



What do you expect from marriage?

Every person who marries enters the marriage relationship with certain expectations. These expectations come from many sources such as parents, values, society, books, speakers, our own ideas, etc. For example, a husband might expect his wife to be at the door when he arrives home, to always be at home and never work, and to have sex with him whenever he wants to. A wife might expect her husband to go to her parent's house with her whenever she goes, to be the spiritual leader in their home, and to spend Saturdays at home and not hang out with the guys.

Exercise Handout 1—Marital Expectations
Handout 1A—Complete Marriage Anticipation questions

Goals in Marriage

Less than three percent (3%) of married couples have set goals for their marriage. Goals are vital, for unless you have something in mind that you want to work toward or achieve, you will not get very far. “Where there is no vision (goal), the people perish....” Proverbs 29:18.

Exercise Handout 2—Goals in Marriage

Fulfilling Needs in Marriage

One of the motivating factors for marriage is the fulfillment of needs in one's life. In marriage counseling, we find that one of the major complaints couples bring in is that of not having their needs met. Often, one partner is attempting to meet the needs of the other but he does not always know what the needs are and/or does not know exactly how to meet them. Thus, it is important for a married person to define his needs specifically and then indicate how he would like his partner to respond in order to meet these needs.

Exercise (Written or Oral)

Note: If exercise is completed orally, the couple should turn to each other and communicate.

Needs in Marriage

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Social and Intellectual
4. Spiritual

What My Spouse Can Do to Fulfill These Needs

MARRIAGE EXPECTATIONS

List four expectations you will have of your fiancé when you are married.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Now list four expectations you think your fiancé will have for you in marriage.

1.
2.
3.
4.

***Exchange your list of expectations and discuss. ***

MARRIAGE ANTICIPATION QUESTIONS

1. What I appreciate most about my fiancé is _____

2. What I dislike the most about my fiancé' is _____

3. Once we are married, the biggest change I will have to make is _____

4. When I think about our marriage, what concerns me the most is _____

5. What makes me the angriest is _____

6. When I get married, the biggest change I will experience with my own family is _____

7. Of all the members of my family, I would say that the family member my fiancé is closest to is _____

8. Of all the members of my family that my fiancé knows, I would say that the family member he or she is least close to is _____

9. I would say that the hardest subject for the two of us to talk about is _____

10. I think the greatest strength of our relationship is _____

GOALS IN MARRIAGE

List four goals for your marriage (you both want to achieve.)
(Time limit, if possible)

1.
2.
3.
4.

List two goals that you would like to see your fiancé achieve.

1.
2.

List two goals that you yourself would like to achieve.

1.
2.

WHAT ABOUT...?

- a. Where are you going to live?**
- b. What about work...will you both work...for how long?**
- c. What about churches...will you both attend the same church?**
- d. What about children...how many...when...birth control?**
- e. What about school...do you have any plans of furthering your education?**

Session Four–Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision Making



Personal Note

- The couple and the Pastor must listen to the audiotape “Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision making” prior to this session.
- Ask if there are any questions concerning the tape.

Handout #1 Role Concepts Comparison
Handout #2 Decision Making Process

In-Laws

By reason of your new marriage, you will become an in-law and you also gain in-laws. The questions below are designed to assist you in your effort to establish a wholesome relationship with your future in-laws.

First, discuss their present parental relationships.

1. Are both parents alive?
2. How was your childhood relationship with your parents? (Example: Did they raise you?)
3. How is your present relationship with your parents?
4. How do your parents feel about your plans for marriage?
5. How do you think your in-laws view you?
6. What would you consider to be interference by your in-laws?
7. Describe how and where you would like to spend your first Thanksgiving & Christmas.
8. What does leaving mother/ father mean to you? What do you think it involves?

MARRIAGE MANUAL

Session #4

Handout #1

YOUR ROLE CONCEPTS COMPARISON

The purpose of this session is to assist you concerning your expectations regarding the husband-wife roles in your relationship.

What do you believe about your role concept in marriage? For each statement below, circle one number.

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Mildly agree
- (3) Not sure
- (4) Mildly disagree
- (5) Strongly disagree

<i>Wife</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Husband</i>
1 2 3 4 5	A. The husband is head of the home.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	B. The wife should not be employed outside the home.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	C. The husband should help regularly with the dishes.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	D. It is alright for the wife to initiate lovemaking with her husband.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	E. The husband and wife should plan the budget and manage the money matters together.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	F. Neither the husband nor the wife should purchase any major items without consulting the other.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	G. The father is the one responsible for disciplining the children.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	H. A wife who has special talent should have a career.	1 2 3 4 5

YOUR ROLE CONCEPTS COMPARISON

<i>Wife</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Husband</i>
1 2 3 4 5	I. It is the wife's responsibility to keep the house neat and clean.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	J. The husband should take his wife out somewhere twice a month.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	K. The wife is just as responsible for the children's discipline as the husband.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	L. It is the husband's job to do the yard work.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	M. The mother should be the teacher of values to the children.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	N. Children should be allowed to help plan family activities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	O. Children develop better in a home with parents who are strict disciplinarians.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	P. Money that the wife earns is her money.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Q. The husband should have at least one night a month out with his friends.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	R. The wife should always be the one to cook.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	S. The husband's responsibility is to his job and the wife's responsibility is to the home and children.	1 2 3 4 5

MARRIAGE MANUAL

Session #4

Handout #2

YOUR PERCENTAGE OF THE DECISION

Describe the decision-making process that you think you will have in your marriage by putting the percentage of influence that you will have and that your spouse will have for various issues. The total for each decision must be 100 percent.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Her Vote (%)</i>	<i>His Vote (%)</i>
Choice of a new car		
Choice of a home		
Choice of furniture		
Choice of your own wardrobe		
Choice of vacation spots		
Choice of décor for the home		
Choice of mutual friends		
Choice of entertainment		
Choice of church		
Choice of child-rearing practices		
Choice of TV shows		
Choice of home menu		
Choice of number of children		
Choice of where we live		
Choice of husband's vocation		
Choice of wife's vocation		
Choice of determining for what and how the money is spent.		

Session Five—Communication



(Oral Exercises)

Communication is to love what blood is to life. It is impossible to have any kind of relationship unless there is communication. That is true for you and your fiancé and for your relationship with God.

How would you define communication?

A. Communication... Three basic elements

1. Talking
2. Listening
3. Understanding

Talking...In our communication we send messages (talking). Every message has three components: the actual content (words), the tone of voice, and nonverbal communication (gestures—smile, gentle touch, tears, raised eyebrows, rolling eyes, grunt, turned head, etc.) One researcher has suggested that most of our messages are sent through tone of voice and nonverbal communication.

Content 7% vs. 77%

Tone of Voice 38%

Nonverbal Communication 55%

a. Exercises

1. You are trying to watch your favorite TV program, but your spouse is continually interrupting and asking you questions. The program is at a crucial part and you don't want to miss it. You say_____.
2. Your spouse serves you breakfast. You notice that the bacon is overcooked, which you don't like. The toast is served lightly toasted with fresh butter, which is exactly what you like. You say_____.

b. Things to Avoid

1. Sarcasm...Sharp remarks designed to cut or give pain.
2. Ridicule...to make fun of (overweight, etc.)
3. Innuendos...Negative insinuations, hints, or concealed putdowns.

Note: We are not talking about good-natured humor –but that which destroys the self-esteem of your spouse (rudeness).

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”. –James 1:19

- c. Listening defined (James 1:19; Proverbs 17:28)
 - 1. Shut your mouth
 - 2. Lay aside your point; hear with thoughtful attention
 - 3. Create a non-threatening environment; watch negative gestures that suggest, “You are stupid.” “I don’t want to hear you.”
 - 4. Repeat what was said. (You should be able to if you were listening.)
 - 5. Ask questions for clarity.
- d. Understanding...What is Understanding? (Proverbs 18:2 Amplified Bible)
 - 1. Consider what your spouse is saying.
 - 2. Empathize; Put yourself in your spouse’s place; Seek to understand your spouse’s feelings as well as the words spoken.

B. Discuss the Enemies of Communication

- 1. Tears
- 2. Criticism
- 3. Talkativeness
 - a. Talking too much.
 - b. Failing to keep family confidence.
- 4. Silence—“turtle act”
- 5. Sensitiveness—easily hurt or offended
- 6. Pride—at times you have to admit you were wrong
- 7. Selfishness—“I just don’t feel like talking.”
- 8. Anger
- 9. Unforgiveness
- 10. Introverted—quiet, shy personality (Marriage is a team sport.)

C. Resolving Conflict

Conflict is inevitable. When two imperfect people with different personalities, attitudes, backgrounds, and sometimes-different needs, desires, and goals come together, conflict, contention, and disagreement is inevitable. The conflicts themselves are not the problem but rather the couple’s reaction to them. Good communication is the key to solving any kind of problem.

- 1. Five ways to deal with conflict.
 - a. Withdraw—physically or psychologically—the situation or problem viewed as hopeless; consequently, there is no need to try to resolve the conflict.
 - b. Win—the proud and domineering person has determined to win, proven to be right no matter what the cost, even if it means destroying the other person or the relationship. (This marriage usually ends in divorce.)
 - c. Yield—give in to get along. You don’t like it, but rather than fight, you give in to the other person’s wishes. (The person usually ends up hurt, frustrated, and resentful.)

- d. Compromise—give a little to get a little.
- e. Resolve—through open and direct communication, coming to a positive where you can both function and be satisfied.

2. Principles to Resolving Conflict

- a. When conflict arises, instead of demanding that you be heard, listen carefully to the other person. (Proverbs 18:13)
- b. Select an appropriate time. (Proverbs 15:23 AMP)
- c. Each person should define the problem and the areas of agreement and disagreement. (Note: You may be talking about different things. Following this procedure will also keep you from repeating the same things over and over.)
- d. Since most conflicts are two-sided, honestly and objectively identify your own contribution to the problem.

Note: If your spouse sees you are willing to accept some responsibility, he (she) will probably be more open and cooperative.

- e. State what you (both spouses) can do to help and ask your spouse's opinion. (Be open and guard against defensiveness.)
- f. Pray

Session Six—Finance



Part I—Introduction

Money! It takes money to eat, pay the rent, buy groceries, etc. Your attitude toward money and your past lifestyle may be an adjustment for you as you enter into marriage.

The exercises in this session have been designed to help you determine what is important to you in terms of finances and to help you make realistic plans for your future.

Exercise #1

Purpose—To reveal just how much or how little you know about the cost of items purchased by your fiancé.

Instructions—Have each person take a few minutes to complete the handout separately. Use price ranges rather than exact dollars. Then go over one for the women, and then the men, having them critique each other. You merely serve as a mediator. (However, it would be wise for you to know what items cost).

(Note: Why is this important to know? What was this designed to do?)
(Scripture Reference: Song of Solomon 2:15)

Part II—Principles to Live By—Handout #2

Instructions—Have couple read one scripture at a time, and then answer the question. It may be a good idea to assign a scripture if one person appears to be more vocal. You want total involvement.

If time is limited, you should use only a few during the session and ask them to finish later.

Note: At this point, you can go over the following seven principles used in the Pastor's most recent seminar.

1. Tithes and Offering—laws of prosperity
2. No longer two but one—no division
3. Budget and plan for big expenses—taxes, insurance, vacations, non-recurring expenses.
4. Patience
5. Can have joy/peace—even when you are standing in faith—don't allow Satan to divide you over financial situations—key: right priorities. (Marriage comes first.)
6. Work together—Open communication
7. Have a marriage enrichment fund—Set aside money for the purpose of

enhancing your marriage. (Example: eating out, honeymoon weekend, movies, books/tapes, retreat, and some activities together.)

Handout #2—What Principles Do You Derive from These Verses?

Part III

Handout #3—Principles of Handling Money

(Source: Edwin Cole—Communication, Sex, and Money)

Instructions: Go over each principle (or a limited number of principles) and discuss. Ask questions and clarify as needed.

Part IV

Plan and Prepare a Workable Budget

Note: Determine if couple already has a budget.

Instructions: 1) Go over the *Do's and Don'ts for Budgeting* from Handout #4.
2) Encourage couple to prepare a budget as soon as possible, preferably before the wedding.

Note: If this is the last session, recommend couple listen to the recent tapes on “Sex” done by the Pastor in the Marriage seminar.

- Problems in Marriage
- Sexual Problems
- Meeting Your Spouse's Sexual Needs—Wives/Husbands

MARRIAGE MANUAL
 Session #6—Finances
 Handout #1

<u>For Men</u>	<u>For Women</u>
<p>How much would you pay for these?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 10-pound turkey_____ 2. A 5-pound bag of potatoes _____ 3. A chuck roast for six _____ 4. A large box of detergent_____ 5. A pair of pantyhose_____ 6. A three-piece pants suit_____ 7. A girl’s blouse_____ 8. A pair of kid’s Levi’s_____ 9. A pair of children’s shoes_____ 10. A nylon lace half slip_____ 11. A pair of sheer Dacron window curtains_____ 12. A permanent weave_____ 13. A tube of lipstick_____ 	<p>How much would you pay for these?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A quart of motor oil _____ 2. A set of shock absorbers _____ 3. A set of first-line tires _____ 4. Fertilizer to cover the lawn _____ 5. A 6-foot aluminum ladder _____ 6. A gallon of latex paint _____ 7. A boy’s baseball mitt _____ 8. An “off-the rack” suit _____ 9. A man’s raincoat _____ 10. A mid-priced pair of shoes _____ 11. A dress shirt _____ 12. A businessman’s lunch for two ____ 13. Two tickets to a football or baseball game _____

MARRIAGE MANUAL

Session #6--Finances

Handout #2

What Principles Do You Derive From These Scriptures?

Proverbs 15:16	Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble within.
Proverbs 20:4	The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing
Deuteronomy 8:17-18	And thou shall say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand have gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.
Luke 6:27-38	(Read from Bible)
1 Timothy 6:6-10	(Read from Bible)
Proverbs 28:8	He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he that gather it for him will pity the poor

PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING MONEY

God is your source
Seek God first in everything
Decisions require responsibility (Ex. Having children) Decisions cannot be unilateral in marriage
Tithing is a basic visible evidence of faith
Get out of debt
Start where you are with what you have (Don't try to start where your parents are.)
Live within your means (manifested finances vs. faith)
To obey God today is to trust Him for tomorrow
Keep adequate records
Be generous with God—and with others
No money secrets (Example: Purchases without spouse's knowledge...taking care of outside children)
It is important for husbands (sole breadwinners) to keep in mind that a woman does not like to ask for every dollar she receives—a tight grip on your wallet will produce a spirit of bitterness and resentment. Remember, she spends equal time working, keeping the family together, and the household functioning. She should have a personal allowance, as well as a say so on how the money is spent.
God's ranking system has nothing to do with how much money you make or how much you know or who owns the property.

BUDGETING

DO'S and Don'ts

- DO** plan together. Hold a definite date together—seek agreement and cooperation. Make decisions together.
- DO** define your financial goals. Start a budget with a purpose in mind. Have a clear idea of why you're trying to budget.
- DON'T** rush into a budget before you know how much you now spend for what. Devote several weeks to keeping a detailed record of expenditures.

Session Seven—Divorce and Remarriage



(Scripture References: Joel 2:25-26 and Ruth 4:13)

“Finding a ‘new deal’ in marriage is not always easy. If divorce has its spectrum of problems and frustrations, remarriage has its own challenges to all who enter in. Many people who find a new relationship that results in marriage seem to feel that things will be just as they were in their previous marriage. The only difference will be a new spouse. It does not take very long to find out that remarriage places a person in a whole new world with added complications to daily routines. A remarriage is not simply a union between two people as it might have been the first time. It is also a union between two different families, and if both ex-spouses have remarried, it could well be a union between four different families. It could double our pleasure and quadruple our frustrations.”

A. Post Remarriage Considerations

1. How many children will be directly involved in the marriage, who will have custody, who will support them, and where will they live?
2. How much money of the new family’s income will go to support the ex-spouse and children?
3. Where will you live—his house, your house, or a new house? Many hurts are spared when new housing is provided. This avoids anyone being a guest in another person’s home.
4. How will the children address their new parents?
5. Where will the children who live with ex-spouses stay when they come for weekends, vacations, or overnight?
6. What about legal adoptions and name changes for the children?
7. How will discipline be handled in the home? Will favoritism be shown to one mate’s children over the others? Growing Through Divorce (local bookstore)

Note: Out of every 3 marriages, 1 involves remarriage for at least one of the partners. Out of 4 divorcees, 3 marry again. Remarriage is prevalent among those who have lost a mate through death.

B. Potential Problem Areas

1. Money—each individual has a financial status, each has a source of income, each has a pattern of paying bills and making financial decisions, each has financial obligations to meet (a system must be developed to merge/ amalgamate these two systems.)
2. Children—competition between new brothers and sisters, favoritism by the parents, child support payments, children's opposition to the new marriage, discipline.
3. Comparison--- (a) calling new spouse by name of former mate, (b) alluding to experiences you once had with your first partner, (c) cherishing mementos and even furniture that you had once picked with your first mate.
4. Unforgiveness—(i.e. ex-spouse, in-laws, God, self)

C. Three Keys to Successful Remarriage

1. Adaptability and flexibility—the ability to change and adapt.
2. Empathy—the ability to be sensitive to the needs, hurts, desires of others, to feel with them and experience the world from their perspective.
3. The ability to work through problems.

D. How to Win with Stepchildren

No one can become an instant father or mother overnight. It is going to take time and adjustment on everyone's part. Many new parents simply expect stepchildren to welcome them with open arms and keep living as though nothing happened. Few children make an easy adjustment, especially if their real parent is close by and in contact with them.

The first rule for success as a stepparent is to give the new relationship time to grow and develop. The second step would be to really work at building that relationship. Your new position in the home may grant you authority, but respect is something you earn. I feel that the responsibility is on the shoulders of the new parent to work at winning the respect and love of the stepchildren. A child may resent a new parent for showing love and affection for his mother or father when little of that love is shown to him. I have known stepparents who have literally ignored their stepchildren and left them entirely up to the natural parent. Few homes will survive this kind of cold treatment.

A third step in winning with stepchildren is to make them feel as important as your own natural children. A love that is shared equally will bring great returns. There are a million ways a stepparent can share and show love. Love always wins. A fourth step is to realize that you are not a replacement for the other parent. Don't try to be. You are who you are and not a replica of the departed parent. Don't get trapped into playing the role and letting yourself be compared with the absent father or mother. Affirm your own individuality from the beginning and you will gain respect. Growing Through Divorce by Jim Smoke.

Note: Recommend that the couple listen to the "Sex" tapes done by the Pastor in the recent Marriage seminar.