

The Institute For Marriage and Family Affairs



MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELING MANUAL

A Marriage Counselor's Handbook
Part I



Dr. Vic and May Victor

Marriage & Family Counselor's Manual
Part I



**THE INSTITUTE FOR MARRIAGE
AND FAMILY AFFAIRS**

Dr. Vic and May Victor

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Chapter 1

Intake and Gathering Information

Getting to know you

The success of your ministry as a marriage counselor will depend largely on the information you are able to gather about your client, your protégé or even your spouse. You cannot apply your well-polished knowledge of marital relationship, including the skills that you are acquiring from this Marriage and Family Counselors Manual unless you have enough information about each case.

Sources of Referrals

As a marriage counselor, most of your referrals will come from your Church members or members of a family-oriented organization like village associations, social clubs, fellowship groups and colleagues at work. If your marriage is successful, people will come to you for advice and refer couples in crisis to you for help. Secondly, if you have a passion for marriage ministry, you will find yourself helping young people without being asked to do so.

For those of us who intend to pursue this further than personal use and as a hobby, you may need to let your sphere of influence know that this is what you do and that you are trained and certified to counsel couples and offer premarital counseling. You may do this by organizing an open house

and advertising yourself as a marriage counselor. It is important to announce yourself as a fee-paying marriage counselor otherwise people will continue to come to you for free advice.

Information gathering and due diligence

Your due diligence as a marriage counselor begins by gathering the relevant information for your recommendations and counseling. We are not talking about spying or investigating your client; we are talking about having each person tell you their story in a way that it contains what you need to make an informed decision. You can obtain virtually any information if you ask the right question. You can also ask any question if you ask the right way.

Most of your information should come from the couple that you are counseling. In conflict resolution situations you may have to talk to third parties to verify and corroborate information. It is important to obtain the permission of the couple before asking other people's opinion. Some notable sources of information are pastors, parents, neighbors, friends, and previous mediators.

Relevant and pertinent information

What is relevant for each case will depend on the case. However, there are some general information that are basic to every case you are going to handle. We suggest you customize your own intake forms for your mentees, protégé, and clients.

Understanding the Personalities in Marriage

"I will make you a helper fit for you" Genesis 2:18

Counselor's Guide

- Marriage can be divided into the purpose of marriage, principles of achieving the purpose and the personnel in the marriage.
- The personalities in marriage are the biggest point of conflict
- Understanding the people in marriage will help in appreciating their view and resolving their conflicts.

Introduction

Everyone created by God has a unique disposition which is the way we view and make meaning of our world. These are not from learning or orientation but innate characteristics in us. Understanding the personalities of the parties in a marriage or family is important for a few reasons.

First, marriage is a unit of two individuals of different gender, with different personalities, from different families, and sometimes different training and professional orientations trying to become one. Second, because it takes a lifetime to become truly one in thinking, behaving and interest, couples who have a good understanding of their personality typology have a better relationship. Third, because marriage is teamwork, understanding the strengths and weakness of the parties help couples to cover each other's weaknesses and leverage on each other's strength. Fourth, knowing each other's typology help couples to anticipate or predict what the other partner will do in a situation where they are not available.

Marriage is not an event but a process that takes the lifetime of negotiating, accepting, rejecting, and learning to live with each other. The most difficult challenge in marriage is blending two unique individuals into one person.

This requires learning to live with what you must live with to function as a husband or wife.

Four Personality Typologies

There are several personality typologies, but most of them are based on the premise proposed by Hippocrates in the 5th Century BC. Hippocrates divided human characteristics into four clusters according to the following:

1. Choleric
2. Melancholic
3. Phlegmatic
4. Sanguine

By understanding your personality, you also understand what your personality is not, and can start to see differences in those around you in a deeper way. But another added benefit of knowing about your personality type is to better understand them – the people around you whom you work with, interact with, go to family gatherings with, take care of, pretty much anyone you have a social interaction with.

Discovering Your Personality

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following rows of four words across, place an X in front of the one word that most often applies to you. Continue through all forty lines. Be sure each number is marked. If you are not sure of which word “most applies”, ask your mother, father, siblings or anyone who knew you as a child, and think of what your answers would have been when you were a child.

Strengths

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 ___ Adventurous | ___ Adaptable | ___ Animated | ___ Analytical |
| 2 ___ Persistent | ___ Playful | ___ Persuasive | ___ Peaceful |
| 3 ___ Submissive | ___ Self-sacrificing | ___ Sociable | ___ Strong-willed |
| 4 ___ Considerate | ___ Controlled | ___ Competitive | ___ Convincing |
| 5 ___ Refreshing | ___ Respectful | ___ Reserved | ___ Resourceful |
| 6 ___ Satisfied | ___ Sensitive | ___ Self-reliant | ___ Spirited |
| 7 ___ Planner | ___ Patient | ___ Positive | ___ Promoter |
| 8 ___ Sure | ___ Spontaneous | ___ Scheduled | ___ Shy |
| 9 ___ Orderly | ___ Obliging | ___ Outspoken | ___ Optimistic |
| 10 ___ Friendly | ___ Faithful | ___ Funny | ___ Forceful |
| 11 ___ Daring | ___ Delightful | ___ Diplomatic | ___ Detailed |
| 12 ___ Cheerful | ___ Consistent | ___ Cultured | ___ Confident |
| 13 ___ Idealistic | ___ Independent | ___ Inoffensive | ___ Inspiring |
| 14 ___ Demonstrative | ___ Decisive | ___ Dry Humor | ___ Deep |
| 15 ___ Mediator | ___ Musical | ___ Mover | ___ Mixes Easily |
| 16 ___ Thoughtful | ___ Tenacious | ___ Talker | ___ Tolerant |
| 17 ___ Listener | ___ Loyal | ___ Leader | ___ Lively |
| 18 ___ Contented | ___ Chief | ___ Chartmaker | ___ Cute |
| 19 ___ Perfectionist | ___ Pleasant | ___ Productive | ___ Popular |
| 20 ___ Bouncy | ___ Bold | ___ Behaved | ___ Balanced |

Weaknesses

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 21 ___ Blank | ___ Bashful | ___ Brassy | ___ Bossy |
| 22 ___ Undisciplined | ___ Unsympathetic | ___ Unenthusiastic | ___ Unforgiving |
| 23 ___ Reticent | ___ Resentful | ___ Resistant | ___ Repetitious |
| 24 ___ Fussy | ___ Fearful | ___ Forgetful | ___ Frank |
| 25 ___ Impatient | ___ Insecure | ___ Indecisive | ___ Interrupts |
| 26 ___ Unpopular | ___ Uninvolved | ___ Unpredictable | ___ Unaffectionate |
| 27 ___ Headstrong | ___ Haphazard | ___ Hard to Please | ___ Hesitant |
| 28 ___ Plain | ___ Pessimistic | ___ Proud | ___ Permissive |
| 29 ___ Angered Easily | ___ Aimless | ___ Argumentative | ___ Alienated |
| 30 ___ Naïve | ___ Negative Attitude | ___ Nervy | ___ Nonchalant |
| 31 ___ Worrier | ___ Withdrawn | ___ Workaholic | ___ Wants Credit |
| 32 ___ Too Sensitive | ___ Tactless | ___ Timid | ___ Talkative |
| 33 ___ Doubtful | ___ Disorganized | ___ Domineering | ___ Depressed |
| 34 ___ Inconsistent | ___ Introvert | ___ Intolerant | ___ Indifferent |
| 35 ___ Messy | ___ Moody | ___ Mumbles | ___ Manipulative |
| 36 ___ Slow | ___ Stubborn | ___ Show-off | ___ Skeptical |
| 37 ___ Loner | ___ Lord-over-others | ___ Lazy | ___ Loud |
| 38 ___ Sluggish | ___ Suspicious | ___ Short-tempered | ___ Scatterbrained |
| 39 ___ Revengeful | ___ Restless | ___ Reluctant | ___ Rash |
| 40 ___ Compromising | ___ Critical | ___ Crafty | ___ Changeable |

Personality Scoring Sheet

Now transfer all your X's to the corresponding words and add up your totals under strengths in Lines 1-20. Do same for Weaknesses in Lines 21-40. Then add the grand total. The highest number becomes your Dominant Personality while the next highest number becomes your Non Dominant Personality.

Strengths

SANGUINE POPULAR	CHOLERIC POWERFUL	MELANCHOLY PERFECT	PHLEGMATIC PEACEFUL
1 ___ Animated	___ Adventurous	___ Analytical	___ Adaptable
2 ___ Playful	___ Persuasive	___ Persistent	___ Peaceful
3 ___ Sociable	___ Strong-willed	___ Self-sacrificing	___ Submissive
4 ___ Convincing	___ Competitive	___ Considerate	___ Controlled
5 ___ Refreshing	___ Resourceful	___ Respectful	___ Reserved
6 ___ Spirited	___ Self-reliant	___ Sensitive	___ Satisfied
7 ___ Promoter	___ Positive	___ Planner	___ Patient
8 ___ Spontaneous	___ Sure	___ Scheduled	___ Shy
9 ___ Optimistic	___ Outspoken	___ Orderly	___ Obliging
10 ___ Funny	___ Forceful	___ Faithful	___ Friendly
11 ___ Delightful	___ Daring	___ Detailed	___ Diplomatic
12 ___ Cheerful	___ Confident	___ Cultured	___ Consistent
13 ___ Inspiring	___ Independent	___ Idealistic	___ Inoffensive
14 ___ Demonstrative	___ Decisive	___ Deep	___ Dry Humor
15 ___ Mixes Easily	___ Mover	___ Musical	___ Mediator
16 ___ Talker	___ Tenacious	___ Thoughtful	___ Tolerant
17 ___ Lively	___ Leader	___ Loyal	___ Listener
18 ___ Cute	___ Chief	___ Chartmaker	___ Contented
19 ___ Popular	___ Productive	___ Perfectionist	___ Pleasant
20 ___ Bouncy	___ Bold	___ Behaved	___ Balanced
Total Strengths			
___ TOTALS	___ TOTALS	___ TOTALS	___ TOTALS

Weaknesses

SANGUINE POPULAR	CHOLERIC POWERFUL	MELANCHOLY PERFECT	PHLEGMATIC PEACEFUL
21 ___ Brassy	___ Bossy	___ Bashful	___ Blank
22 ___ Undisciplined	___ Unsympathetic	___ Unforgiving	___ Unenthusiastic
23 ___ Repetitious	___ Resistant	___ Resentful	___ Reticent
24 ___ Forgetful	___ Frank	___ Fussy	___ Fearful
25 ___ Interrupts	___ Impatient	___ Insecure	___ Indecisive
26 ___ Unpredictable	___ Unaffectionate	___ Unpopular	___ Uninvolved
27 ___ Haphazard	___ Headstrong	___ Hard-to-please	___ Hesitant
28 ___ Permissive	___ Proud	___ Pessimistic	___ Plain
29 ___ Angered Easily	___ Argumentative	___ Alienated	___ Aimless
30 ___ Naive	___ Nervy	___ Negative Attitude	___ Nonchalant
31 ___ Wants Credit	___ Workaholic	___ Withdrawn	___ Worrier
32 ___ Talkative	___ Tactless	___ Too Sensitive	___ Timid
33 ___ Disorganized	___ Domineering	___ Depressed	___ Doubtful
34 ___ Inconsistent	___ Intolerant	___ Introvert	___ Indifferent
35 ___ Messy	___ Manipulative	___ Moody	___ Mumbles
36 ___ Show-off	___ Stubborn	___ Skeptical	___ Slow
37 ___ Loud	___ Lord-over-others	___ Loner	___ Lazy
38 ___ Scatterbrained	___ Short Tempered	___ Suspicious	___ Sluggish
39 ___ Restless	___ Rash	___ Revengeful	___ Reluctant
40 ___ Changeable	___ Crafty	___ Critical	___ Compromising

TOTAL WEAKNESSES

___ TOTALS ___ TOTALS ___ TOTALS ___ TOTALS

COMBINED TOTALS

___ TOTALS ___ TOTALS ___ TOTALS ___ TOTALS

Personality Types Explained

Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb? Job 31:15

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. Psalm 139:13-14

1. Popular Sanguine

Popular Sanguines are extroverts, optimists, and talkers. Being talkative has its advantages. They can easily liven up a party with their presence because of their 'storyteller' attitude. With their appealing personality, they can easily attract others and make friends. Many people will admire them for their sense of humor, cheerfulness, and enthusiasm.

People with this type of personality volunteer for certain jobs and help in creating new activities; they can instantly inspire others to work and join the fun. It's no longer a surprise that Sanguine people have many friends. They basically love people and don't hold grudges. If they commit a mistake, they will readily apologize.

If you have this type of personality, you can be a great parent. The home will have a fun atmosphere, and you can develop 'friendship' with your children. Even your children's friends will love your company. Amidst the disaster, you will still find humor. The child in you is always at work.

As a compulsive talker, you will often elaborate and exaggerate stories which can scare others away. You are naive, always complaining, angered

easily, and speaks loudly. With your restless energy, others won't be able to keep up with you.

At work, Sanguine people prefer to talk a lot and tend to forget their obligations. Their confidence also disappears instantly, and their decisions are based primarily on feelings. You are forgetful and fickle which makes others hate you.

As a parent, the home is frenzy and disorganized. When there are arguments, you tend to be one-sided, and you also tend to forget important appointments. It's great to be fun loving and always full of bright ideas, but the real problem is that you don't 'follow through'.

Help with Weaknesses: Help organize the Popular Sanguine. Help the Sanguine to talk less. The Sanguine can achieve this by limiting the stories they would like to tell. By so doing they will end up telling half their stories. As a Sanguine, try to see how long you can go mute before someone else notices that you have not said a word. Watch out for signs of boredom in your audience and learn to condense your comments. Stop exaggerations. Learn to listen. Be sensitive to other peoples' interest. Pay attention to people's names. Pull your life together. Grow up.

2. Powerful Choleric

Many businesspersons and sportsmen out there possess the Powerful Choleric personality. If you have this type of personality, you are an extrovert. The good thing about being choleric is that you are a born leader. You possess qualities like being active, dynamic, decisive, strong-willed, self-sufficient, independent, unemotional, and not discouraged easily. You are a person exuding with confidence, and you can run almost anything.

However, your negative traits can also affect you such as being bossy, impatient, can't relax, quick-tempered, enjoys arguments or controversies, unsympathetic, and too impetuous or impulsive.

A Powerful Choleric parent is a dominant type and barely have time for their family. When the rest of the family members get mediocre performance, the Choleric becomes impatient. Your children will find it hard to relax in your presence and can even lead to depression. The good thing about a choleric as a parent is that they can teach their children how to establish their goals in life. The home is also kept organized, and the children are taught to act and possess sound leadership.

The Powerful Choleric does not do well with making a lot of friends. They want to lead. They can excel in emergencies. If you are a choleric other people will stay away from you because you tend to become a user, domineering, too independent, unpopular, make decisions on behalf of others, knows a lot, and too possessive. You have very few friends.

In the workplace, you are goal oriented, organize well, delegates work, stimulate activity, look for practical solutions, move quickly, and encourage production. However, as a leader, your subordinates may not appreciate your bored trivia, manipulation capabilities, and the demand for loyalty. You tend to make harsh decisions, is tactless, and rude. When you encounter an obstacle, you see it as a challenge and opportunity at the same time. This is your chance to solve yet another problem! With your positive traits, you can easily motivate other people.

It's no surprise that the Powerful Choleric can love, work, and live intensely. Once they decide or focus on something, they will do everything they can to achieve it. They are always on the go.

Help with Weaknesses: Learn to relax. Take the pressure off others. Plan leisure activities. Respond to others leadership. Don't look down on other people. Practice patience. Keep your advice until asked. Tone down your approach. Stop arguing and stirring up a fight. Learn to apologize. Let someone else be right. Admit you have some fault.

3. Perfect Melancholics

As a Perfect Melancholics, you are creative, respectful, analytical, introverted, and thoughtful. The most appropriate word for you is 'thinker'. You are very careful with your actions.

You can be very moody. There are times when you feel happy, but then after a couple of minutes, you feel depressed or sad. Melancholy personalities tend to be suspicious, critical, and pessimistic. Others won't find it easy to please you because you're always fuzzy with the details. Still, you can create lasting friendships.

Striving for perfection is not wrong, but there are times when you expect too much from others because of your 'perfectionist' attitude. The lives of melancholy persons are usually in order, and their creativity shows in their everyday work. Regarding friendship, you are self-sacrificing which means that your loyalty is unending.

Among your positive traits are serious, purposeful, musical, artistic, talented, conscientious, idealistic, poetic, philosophical, and genius prone. Once you establish your own family, you usually set ambitious standards,

and you want everything to be done right. The home is always in proper order. It is also common for parents having this personality to encourage talent and scholarship. The melancholy personality is also willing to sacrifice for their children's wellbeing.

You have a high standard, keeps things organized, economical, tidy, neat, detail conscious, and can identify creative solutions with ease. However, you are not a people-oriented person and hesitate to begin new projects. Consuming too much time with the planning aspect can be a waste of time and effort especially when others are able to finish ahead of you. You find it very easy to make friends although you are extra cautious. Among the negative attitudes that are seen in melancholy people are socially insecure, skeptical, remote, withdrawn, and don't want to be opposed.

Help with Weaknesses: Deal with depression and moodiness. Look on the bright side of life. Look for positives. Prov. 16:20b Happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord. Relax your standards. Don't spend so much time planning.

4. Peaceful Phlegmatics

As a Peaceful Phlegmatics, you are relaxed, easy going, consistent, kind, sympathetic, witty, and quiet, collected, cool, and calm. However, you also should be aware that negative emotions can also dominate you like being unenthusiastic, worried, fearful, indecisive, selfish, avoid responsibility, reticent, too shy, too compromising, and self-righteous.

Once you have a family of your own, you can be a good parent. You tend to give your children enough time, and you're not hurrying, unlike others.

You are also not easily upset. However, since you usually take life easily, you tend to be lax with the children and so the home becomes disorganized.

As a person with this kind of personality, you are steady and competent in the workplace. Your co-employees will find you agreeable, peaceful, and even has the capability of managing administrative positions. You can mediate problems to avoid conflicts. You can be careless, lazy, not self-motivated or goal oriented, don't want to be pushed, and tends to discourage others.

Since you are pleasant, enjoyable, and inoffensive, you can make a lot of friends in a brief time. You are a good listener, has concern, compassion, and a sense of dry humor. You judge others easily, resists change, stays uninvolved, and dampens enthusiasm. You simply must let go of your selfishness and self-righteousness to keep long lasting friends.

Help with Weaknesses: Try to get enthused about the things around you. Try something new. If possible, pick out something that interests you. Cast off laziness and try to accept responsibility at times. Don't put off till tomorrow what you can do now. Motivate yourself and allow others to motivate you. Learn to communicate your feelings. Learn to say No.

Chapter 2

Understanding Marriage

What is Marriage?

Can two walk together without agreeing? Hosea 3:3

Learning Objectives:

- The Meaning of Marriage
- Marriage is a Covenant
- Marriage is a Destiny
- Marriage is a Gift
- Marriage is a Choice

Counselor's Guide

- The first step to counseling is to gather information necessary for admission and assessment.
- The second step is to help the parties to understand the personalities and the foundational role that personality traits play in a marital relationship.
- The third step is to find out the meaning the individuals make of marriage. This is as important as the first two steps because two cannot walk together unless they agree.
- We form our ideas and beliefs about marriage from observations and education as opposed to intuition.

What is Marriage?

Marriage is a socially and culturally acceptable legal union that establishes a couple's rights, privileges, and obligations under the marital union, and between the parties and others. The worldview of marriage is often influenced by prevailing culture which includes norms, religion, policies, and the timing of marriage. In other words, the definitions of marriage evolve according to the prevailing worldview.

Marriage is also defined by the perception of the parties in the marriage. The meaning that individuals make of their marriage is important for the assessment and treatment plan. That is why the trend toward integrating spirituality and theories of couple and family marriage has proven to be successful in helping couples and families.

Unfortunately, individual perceptions are influenced by culture, upbringing and environment, personality, gender, and life experience. Parents send their children to formal school to learn a trade or acquire skills to make a living for one-third of their life but are reluctant to educate their children on how to be successful in marriage and family engineering that takes a lifetime. The only school of marriage that prepares our children for marriage is the University of Mom and Dad. If mom and dad failed in their marriage, they pass on that toxic information and principles that led to their failure to their children. Our children learn much more from what they observe than what we teach them. Children grow up with unhealthy views of marriage.

The goal of premarital education is to introduce Godly principles on marriage to young adults, help them to discover who they are, and acquire skills necessary for marriage and home-making. The goal of couple

counseling is to help married couples to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses and use that knowledge to enrich their marriage. The goal of counseling couples in crisis is to manage the crisis and proffer solutions to sources of the crisis.

Counselor's Guide: Couple Exercise

To find out what marriage means to each party, give the couple two sheets of paper, and ask them to write five things that marriage means to him or her (If you are using our companion workbook, the question is included there). Please explain to them that you want them to define marriage in their own words. Do not accept theoretical or biblical answer. The question calls for an insightful response on the meaning of marriage.

1. Review the answers to make sure they wrote five meanings each and the answers are personal.
2. Have the parties exchange their papers, look into each other's eye, and take turns reading the response. One partner reads the first response while the other reflects on it and "agrees" or "reserves comment". No one should reject or deny at this stage. (Counselor should cross out the ones agreed and mark the ones that were reserved). Let them continue to take turns until the five meanings are addressed.
3. Discuss the four meanings of marriage with the couple before you proceed. (Marriage is a covenant, destiny, gift, and choice)
4. Review the entire response with the couple again, highlighting the meanings that **align** with the word of God, meanings that **oppose** the word of God and the meaning that the word of God is **silent** about.
5. Have the couple read the meanings as an affirmation to each other.

What Does Marriage Mean to God?

Marriage is a Covenant.

A covenant is an agreement involving two or more persons. There are two kinds of covenants. **Ordinary** covenant and **Spiritual** covenant. An ordinary covenant is a covenant between individuals while a spiritual covenant is a covenant involving God or other spirit beings. Some notable covenants in the bible are: The Adamic Covenant. Genesis 2:15-17, (Edenic covenant). 3:14-21- (Curse), The Noahic Covenant. Genesis 9:11-13, Rainbow, The Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 12:1-3, The Mosaic Covenant. Exodus. 19:3-6, and The New Covenant. Hebrew 9:12-23.

The marriage covenant is a spiritual covenant between a husband and wife with God as a witness. Like the other covenants mentioned above, the marriage covenant is a very important covenant to God. It anchors God's purpose for His kingdom. No wonder, God hates divorce. Malachi 2:16, Mathew 19:9.

Counselor's Guide: Remind your clients of their marriage vows and the need to honor those vows. Do not assume that your clients remember their marriage vows. Most people default into what they saw their parents do in marriage.

Five Elements of a Valid Covenant

Let's consider some of the requirements for a valid covenant in the bible and compare them with the requirements for a marriage covenant.

1. **Ushers in a new beginning.** Heb. 13:20, Genesis 2:25. Gal. 3:15.

2. **A covenant must be witnessed.** A covenant must be public and witnessed. Gen 23:16-18, Mal 2:14-16. (God witnesses every marriage covenant)
3. **Covenants are confirmed or sealed by oath.** Gen 21:23, 31.
4. **Covenants are specific and Permanent** 1 Sam 11:1-2, Gen 9:9-11. Mathew 19:4, 5.
5. **Covenants are memorialized or marked.** Genesis 17:10-11, Gen.9:12-17, Gen 21:31, Heb. 9:11-13.

Counselor's Question #1:

Do you remember your marriage vows? In what way(s) is your marriage vow like or different from the requirements for a covenant listed above?

A. _____

B. _____

The marriage covenant has the same power, promises and penalties as the covenant that God made with Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, and David. God expects you to keep your marriage covenant even as He keeps His own covenant with you. Marriage is about making promises and keeping those promises till the end just as covenant is perpetual in nature.

Keeping the Marriage Covenant: 5 Best Practices for Covenant Keepers.

1. Recite your vows as often as you can. Jeremiah 35:6-8
2. Decide to keep your marriage vows at all cost.
3. Associate with covenant keepers and disassociate from covenant breakers
4. Project and protect your vows of marriage.

5. Avoid the three Ps (People, Places, and Passion).

Reflect on the story of the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35:1-11, 18-19. Cross-reference Numbers 6:1-4. Do you agree that the marriage covenant is designed to be permanent in purpose, process, and perpetuity? The gift of marriage is not for everyone but only for those who can receive the gift. Mathew 19:3-10.

Benefits of Keeping the Marriage Covenant:

Like all covenants, a marriage covenant is meant to benefit one or all the parties involved. Here are some of the benefits of a marriage covenant.

A. Husband.

- For his own Goodness. Genesis 2:18, Proverbs 18:22
- For Procreation. Genesis 1:28
- For Companionship. Ecclesiastes 9:9
- Receives a Helper. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- Obtains Favor. Proverbs 18:22

B. Wife.

- To be loved, Cherished and Cared for. Ephesians 5:25,28, 29
- To be prepared for Christ. Galatians 5:26-27
- To be protected from Harm.
- To be appreciated. Proverbs. 31:28b, 29.

C. God.

- Continuation of His divine plan. Genesis 1:28.
- Godly offspring. Malachi 2:14
- Prevention of immorality. 1 Corinthians. 7:1-5.

Counselor's Guide: It is important to highlight the benefits of keeping the marriage covenant. Some people may need extra motivation to stay married or stay within the bounds of matrimony.

Counselor's Question #2:

Can you think of any other benefit that the marriage covenant bestows on any of the parties involved? Do you think you need more motivation to keep this covenant?

Counselor's Case Study:

A man in his early forties was introduced to a woman who was in her late thirties. When they were dating and courting the man was starting his residency as a medical doctor in a hospital in Dallas Texas, while the woman, an architect, was managing her architectural firm in the Caribbean.

At the end of the honeymoon, the woman returned to her practice in the Caribbean while the man returned to the United States to continue with his search for admission. Three months later, the couple announced that they had separated and commencing proceedings to terminate the marriage.

The reason was that they could not agree on which of the two countries to live after the wedding. The woman assumed that since she was already established in her profession and living in her own house, it made sense for her husband to join her in the Caribbean. She supported her position with the scripture in Genesis 2:24 that said that a man should leave his father and mother and join his wife.

On his part, the man assumed that as the head of the household, he had the right to decide where they are going to, adding that the woman ought to join him in his apartment in the United States. According to him, it

does not matter whether he was established or not since the woman saw his condition and agreed to marry him.

Counselor's Question #3:

1. What do you think went wrong here?
2. What role if any do you think culture played here?
3. What would you have advised the man to do?
4. Would your advice be different for the woman?
5. What if both parties came to you for advice?
6. Who does the bible say should leave and who should be joined?

Read Genesis 2:24-25, Ephesian 5:22, 25 and 33, Colossians 3:18-19

Marriage is a Destiny

Destiny is the predetermined, usually inevitable, or irresistible cause of events. God promised Adam that "I will make you a helpmeet, comparable to you". The word "comparable" means, capable of being compared, having features in common with something else. It means "fitting", "suitable" and able to become one.

These words suggest that marriage is between two persons chosen by God based on their capacity to be one. Your spouse is, therefore, one of the predetermined course of events that are usually inevitable and irresistible. Not everyone is suitable for you. Many people spend their lifetime searching for their purpose instead of following their destiny. Destiny will always lead you to your purpose in life, your partner for life and your place in life.
Genesis 1:28

The story of Isaac and Rebekah's marriage typifies marriage as a destiny.

...blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Genesis 22:17

And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousand; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them. Genesis 24:60

Counselor's Question #4:

Can you spot the similarities in the blessings that Isaac and Rebekah received from their various families before their marriage?

Marriage is a Gift

Marriage is a gift from God. The success of a marriage depends on how well we receive and accept the gift of marriage. Matthew 19:11.

Recognizing and Receiving your Spouse as a Gift.

God saw that Adam needed help for his assignment in life. God gave Adam a perfect gift [wife] that was specific [comparable] to Adam's situation. God did not give Adam a wife because it was Christmas time or Thanksgiving time; He gave Adam a wife because Adam needed one.

Adam recognized the gift as a valuable blessing to his life and his assignment in life. You cannot experience success in your marriage unless and until you recognize and appreciate your spouse as an indispensable part of your life and your assignment in life. Oneness requires receiving your spouse as the best gift from the most generous giver.

Counselor's Guide

Your approach to this topic will depend on whether you are counseling courting couples or married couples. For courting couples, it's a matter of understanding the value and role of the parties to the marriage. For married couples, the focus will be on recognizing the value of their spouse in their life and in the pursuit of their assignment. Some people think that the spouse that is not bringing home the money has less value to the marriage than the spouse that is bringing in the money. Your job is to highlight the values of both spouses as a gift to each other. Marriage is teamwork with each team member bringing something to the table of marriage.

Counselor's Case Study

Mr. James has been married to Mrs. James for 4 years now. They have one child and are experiencing some difficulties with their finance. Mr. James believes that his wife is bringing "bad luck" to his business. He has even entertained the thought of his wife being a witch. According to him "things were going on so well until I married that woman. Since I married her, things have been so difficult for me. It has been one problem or the other." Mr. James is on the verge of closing his business or selling his car because he cannot afford to pay his shop rent.

Upon interviewing them, you gathered that Mr. James met Mrs. James when she was in the University. Mr. James is semi-illiterate but well-traveled because of his business. He was attracted to Mrs. James because she was pretty and well-mannered. He spent a lot of money on her wellbeing while she was in school hoping that when she graduates, she will find a job and help him with his business.

The problem is that Mrs. James has not been able to find a job since graduating because she spent her final year in school doing her final examinations, project and planning her traditional wedding. She spent her NYSC year planning and doing her white wedding. After the marriage, her husband was so insecure that he will not let her go out job hunting or even accept some job offers. Besides, her husband does not understand that she needs to go back to school and obtain a master's degree to make her more appealing to employers of labor, because what she studied in the university was not what the employers of labor are looking for.

When you interviewed Mrs. James alone, she revealed to you that the problem was that Mr. James, her husband, spent his business capital on the traditional wedding and white wedding. Secondly, Mr. James had to relocate from his one-bedroom flat to a 3-bedroom apartment just before the wedding. Finally, Mr. James lost a lot of money because he could not focus on his business during the wedding and the apartment hunting.

Counselor's Question #5:

1. What do you think is wrong here?
2. Would your assessment reveal that there is a money problem?
3. How would you convince Mr. James that Mrs. James is not a witch?
4. What would you recommend to Mr. and Mrs. James?
5. What if Mr. James refuses to participate in the Counseling?

Marriage is a Choice

We have a choice of whether to marry or not, when to marry, who to marry but God reserved the right to choose how we marry. Marriage is a

covenant that we willingly enter, a destiny we must follow, a gift that we happily receive and a choice we freely make. God does not force anyone to get married or to marry any specific person. You may have been under pressure from men to get married or to marry a particular person, but in the end, it is your decision.

Adam was presented with all the animals that God created and giving the opportunity to choose a wife from the animals. The bible said that “So Adam gave names to all cattle, to all birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was found no helper comparable to him”. Genesis 2:20.

When Adam saw what he liked he exclaimed “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of Man” Genesis 2:23.

From the beginning of the establishment of marriage, God gave man a choice on when and who to marry. You were part of the decision-making process of your marriage. You chose your spouse from the billions of other eligible bachelors and bachelorettes in the world. You could have married Jane or Jonah, but you chose your spouse. You chose your spouse for a reason, and the Bible says that whatever is your reason for choosing your spouse, your spouse is a good thing for you.

Notice that both Genesis 2:18 and Proverbs 18:22 used the word “good” to describe the condition of man with and without his wife. Your spouse makes you good.

Dealing with 5 Covenant-Breakers

1. Strange Woman.

2. Playboy
3. Pornography
4. Workaholic
5. Traveling Spouse

Chapter 3

Overview of Problem Areas in Marriage

Check the Foundation

If the foundation is destroyed, what can the builder do?

Learning Objectives:

- Differentiate sources from symptoms of problems in marriage
- Identify 4 major sources of conflict in marriage and relationship
- Understand the effect of building a marriage on a wrong foundation
- Understand the effect of change and adversity in relationship

Counselors Guide:

- Marriage is a system in which the subsystems affect the whole system.
- Cultivate the habit of hearing beyond words, seeing behind the scene, getting into the head and mind of your clients and imagining the theater of acts that cause tension and stress.

A. Sources vs. Symptoms of Problem in Marriage.

Marital relationship can be divided into three broad areas: Purpose, Process, and Personalities.

1. Purpose: The purpose of marriage is the reason for the marriage. The reason for each marriage varies according to personalities, culture, experience, etc.

2. Process: The process of marriage is how the parties to the marriage covenant interact and intra-act with people outside the marital dyad.
3. Personalities: The personalities refer to the parties in the marriage covenant. There are basically three persons in a Christian marriage. God, Husband, and wife.

Problems that arise from Purpose of marriage and Personalities in marriage are foundational problems that are expressed in the process of marriage. For instance, individuals who married for the wrong reason or no reason lack purpose and that lack of purpose may be expressed in lack of commitment, unfaithfulness, directionless, etc.

On the other hand, problems that are rooted in Process may or may not be symptomatic of foundational issues. For instance, communication problems may be from lack of communication skills; intimacy problems may be because of attachment style of sexual or lack of experience in romance and sex.

5 major sources of problem in marriage and relationship

Marriage bends because of character flaws but breaks because of foundational issues in five broad areas: Faulty Foundation, Family of Origin, Unrealistic and Unfulfilled Expectation, incompatibility, and Inability to handle Change or Adversity. We will attempt to look into these five broad areas for clarity.

1. Faulty Foundation



A faulty foundation is a foundation that is not appropriate for the structure that it is resting on it. Foundations must be the right depth and the right strength for the intended building. For instance, if you build a doghouse on a foundation designed for a chicken coop, the doghouse will eventually collapse.

Just as solid or porous foundation determine the stability of a house, so does good or bad foundation determine stability and sustainability of your marriage.

How to identify faulty Foundation

Unlike a building construction whose foundation can be touched and measured, the foundation of a marriage is easier felt than touched. For instance, if one partner is in a marital relationship solely for love, there is no way of measuring that until that partner feels unloved or uncared for. That marriage can only survive if love is expressed and reciprocated. Another

example is couples who marry for financial reasons. Such marriage is likely to end when the financial incentive is no longer there.

As a Counselor, you can find out the foundation of the marriage by asking the question “why did you get married?” and “why did you marry your spouse?”

A marriage that is established on a wrong foundation is unlikely to survive the stress and strain of marriage in the 21st century for the long haul. The good thing is that a shaky foundation can be reinforced or reconstructed.

Counselor's Question #1:

What if you found out after wedding that your spouse has no womb or is impotent?

Counselor's Question #2:

Would your answer be different if your spouse deliberately concealed the fact that she has no womb, or that he is impotent from you?

2. Family of Origin

Marriage is comprised of systems and subsystems where information and skills are formerly transferred and informally modeled with the result that parents are in the business of transferring information to their children on a regular basis. The personalities in marriage are graduates of the University of Marriage between mum and dad. Some of them graduated with honors, while others graduated without honors, but they all carry that certificate and degree until they are educated or oriented toward a different worldview.

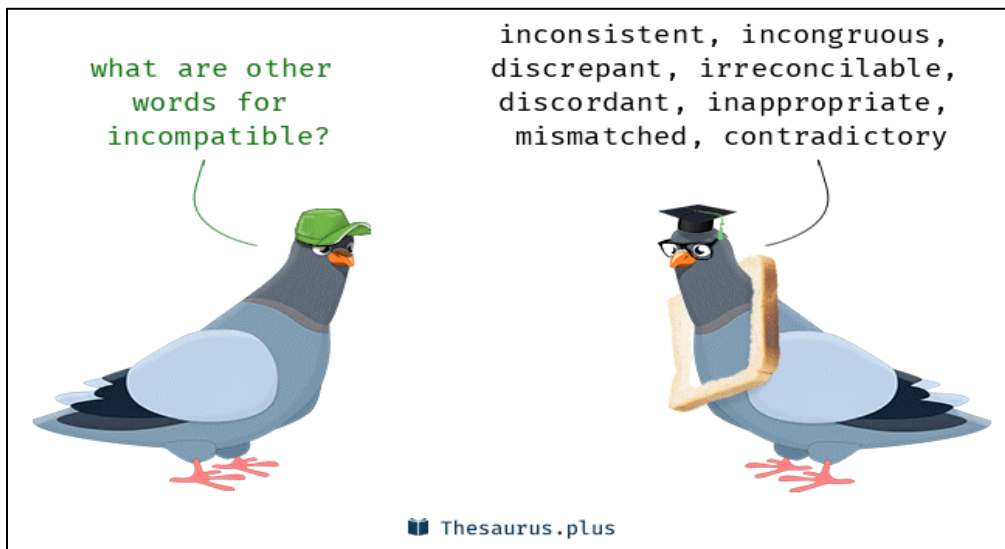
Research has shown that parents who are successful in marriage teach their children how to succeed in marriage. Conversely, parents who failed

in marriage model failed marriage. The divorce rate for children of divorced parents is twice as high as the rate of divorce of children of parents who are successful in marriage. This is because children learn from their parents and parents can only teach and model what they know. No one can give what he does not have, and no one can receive what was not given to him.

If your mother and father were married for 25 years, you aspire to be married for more than 25 years. If your mother was abused by your father, you are more likely to be either indifferent or intolerant of abuse. Couples from dysfunctional homes are more likely to establish a dysfunctional home themselves unless they take steps to break the circle of divorce.

The solution to problems from families of origin is to learn how to leave and cleave. We must recognize that part of who we are in where we came from, but where we are coming from does not have to be part of where we are going.

3. Incompatibility



The third source of problems in marriage is incompatibility. Marriage is about team selection, team building, and teamwork. A team that lacks cohesion and chemistry cannot succeed. If a member of a team does not buy into the team's philosophy, that member becomes more of a burden than a blessing. Incompatibility is a legal basis for divorce in most jurisdictions because couples cannot reconcile their differences.

The only solution to incompatibility in marriage is compatibility. You can fix faulty foundations and families of origin that are based on wrong beliefs, unrealistic expectations, culture, tradition, misrepresentations but it is almost impossible to fix incompatible personalities.

Case Study: A conversation with a Counselor

Newlywed husband: I am done! I can't stand her. We have absolutely nothing in common! She likes to go out, but I love to stay home. It's all a big mistake!"

Counselor: Are you saying you and your spouse do not agree?

Newlywed: Absolutely!

Counselor: Is that not the whole point of marriage. To have what you don't have and enjoy who you don't have. God promised Adam a helper suitable (not same) to Adam. Incompatibility is not a problem.

Are irreconcilable differences a problem?

Newlywed: I thought so too, but it sure does not feel that way now.

4. Unrealistic and Unfulfilled Expectations

Expectation is defined as a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future. Expectation drives our actions. For instance, those who expect to be happy in marriage look forward to being happy in

marriage. Those who expect to have children in marriage look forward to having children in marriage.

Expectation is also a belief that someone will accomplish certain things. For instance, some people expect their spouse to take care of them financially, spiritually, and otherwise make them happy.

Expectations that are based on realistic assessment can fuel growth and progress, but expectations that are based on subjective and unrealistic assessment lead to disappointment, resentment, and despair. Having an unrealistic expectation of what marriage or your partner can do for you may be a function of the meaning we make of marriage.

As a marriage counselor, you may need to review the meaning your client make of marriage to determine whether the client's expectations are realistic or unrealistic. For instance, a spouse who views marriage as a union for companionship may be more distressed in a loveless marriage than a spouse who sees marriage as a partnership.

5. Inability to Adapt

Adversity introduces a man to himself - Albert Einstein

Divorce and broken homes appear to be cyclical. There is a school of thoughts that believes that it takes up to five generations of corrective measures to completely break up a circle of broken marriage



Change is an inevitable fact of life and in marriage. Good and bad things happen to couples and families all the time. The first marriage failed due to a drastic change of economic status. Sometimes couples lack the factors that are necessary for navigating this treacherous terrain like patience, perseverance, loyalty, morality, etc. Let's look at the story of Adam and Eve, the first couple, to see how they handled adversity and the result.

The Good Time

In Genesis 2:18-25 Adam was living in gated community in the most luscious fertile soil. Everything in the garden of Eden was created to serve Adam. Adam oversaw the world. God helped Adam to search and find a wife. Adam was so excited and exclaim; "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man'" Let's just say that Adam and Eve were living the life.

The Bad Time

Now fast forward to a few years later when Adam and Eve made a mistake and lost everything they had. Things fell apart for the couple economically, socially, and spiritually. First, they lost fellowship with God;

Second, they lost their mansion in the garden of Eden; third, they lost the respect of other creatures, fourth, they had to work to make a living. Adam and Eve's experience is comparable to having your mansion in a gated community foreclosed and becoming homeless; and fifth, they lost their status in the community, church, friends, and family. Whereas they were untouchable before, now the serpent can bite them.

The Response

We have seen what Adam did when God blessed him. Let's see what Adam did when God threw them out of the Garden of Eden and cursed them. Adam's attitude toward his wife and family changed dramatically. Adam stopped being loving and caring for his wife. For the first time, Woman became Eve which means mother of my children.

The Principles

Sudden, drastic changes in marriage can be a source of problems in marriage. Some of the drastic changes could be spiritual growth by one of the spouses, change in earning power, health challenges and prolonged absence. It is not what happened to us that matters. It is what we do with what happened to us that matters. Drastic Change in marriage can bring three possible consequences:

1. **Information:** Change can provide facts and promote knowledge about life.

2. **Reformation:** Change can lead to the reformation of how we practice marriage. Change gives you an opportunity to redefine marriage. Tim Keller, the author of the meaning of marriage, said and I agree that "it is

better to choose someone whom you have had problems with and solved it to everybody's satisfaction".

3. **Transformation:** Change can lead to a thorough or dramatic change in form or process. Change can transform the parties to a marriage.

4. **Deformation:** Change can alter the structure and hierarchy of a family living the parties with permanent scars in the relationship. Deformation is the result of a distortion of the process or project. For instance, an adverse situation is a crisis time for most couples, and crisis leads to a survival mood where things may be done.

Chapter 4

Communication

Where it all begins

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:25

Learning Objectives

- Understand the Importance of Communication in Marriage
- Identify signs of Communication breakdown in marriage
- Three mistakes that lead to communication breakdown
- 7 Keys to Effective Communication in Marriage.
- How to reopen and restore communication in Marriage

Counselor's Guide

- Note that lack or ineffectiveness of communication is often symptomatic of other issues.
- Understanding that our communication styles are informed by our gender, personalities, orientations, education, and other variables.

Understanding the Importance of Communication in Marriage.

Communication is the engine that powers every relationship. Every breakdown in communication leads to a breakdown in relationship because relationships are about relating and relating is about communicating.

As a marriage counselor you will notice that the first thing the devil attacks in an otherwise healthy relationship is the couple's ability to

communicate? It is a very effective strategy that works for the devil and works for angels too. “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” Genesis 11:7. Unfortunately by the time the case gets to you the communication is already in a dysfunctional state

Communication and Team Building

Marriage is primarily a team building tool in which two flawed individuals join forces to minimize their weaknesses and accentuate their strength to build a strong team. From the beginning of the relationship, couples communicate and use communication to build their relationship. Relationship rises and dies with communication because the process of harnessing our strengths and protecting our weaknesses require constant communication between husband and wife.

God’s plan for marriage can only be achieved through transparent lifestyle between a husband and his wife. Selfishness and sin take us outside the plan of God and compels us to lie, hate, deceive, cheat, be jealous of our spouse, to be selfish and afraid. God’s idea was for couples to be “naked and not ashamed” in holy matrimony as opposed to secretive and self-centered. And they were both naked [transparent with nothing to hide, protect or preserve] and the man and his wife were not ashamed [afraid of rejection, deceit, dishonest, taken advantage of and abandoned]. Genesis 2:25. (Amp)

Being naked and not ashamed happens when a matured man, truly leaves his father and mother, joins his wife, and becomes one with his wife. Oneness is, therefore, a byproduct of leaving, cleaving, and enmeshing yourself into each other. Implicit in that is absolute trust.

Counselor's Question #1

In what ways can a couple be naked and not ashamed?

Counselor's Question #2

Suggest five things that men and women are secretive and protective about.

A. How to Identify Signs of communication breakdown in four areas:

1. Someone is not saying anything, (Silent treatment)
2. Someone is not hearing what is being said. (Absent mindedness)
3. Someone can't be trusted with his/her word. (Lack of Trust)
4. One or both parties lack the proper skill to communicate (Lack of skills)

Counselor's Guide: Most of the cases that you will be dealing with will involve a symptom of one of the four things listed above. Your primary approach as a counselor is to reopen communication between the husband and wife.

Four-Step Processes to repair communication breakdown for couples.

1. Start the conversation on a lighter mood.
2. Review the reason for the communication breakdown.
3. Discuss the need for communication in your marriage.
4. Avoid defending your position and interest.

The communication breakthrough Steps for Counselors.

Four-step processes to repair communication breakdown for couples.

1. Start with the couple by working with the motivated person
2. If step one is not effective open communication between you and all the parties involved in resolving the conflict. This may include pastors, friends, families, and children if they are of age.

3. If you are unable to communicate with husband and wife through your secondary channel of communication, you must work with whichever of the parties you are communicating with.
4. Assess the need for psychoeducation on communication skills

B. Three Mistakes that Couples Make In Communication.

1. Speaking our language to our spouse and expecting our spouse to understand.
2. Speaking our fears and excitement instead of our facts and figures
3. Majoring on the minor things and minoring on the major things.

C. Effective Communication in Marriage

Effective communication is communication that accomplishes the goal of the communicator. Effective communication between couples in marriage begins with trust, grows with love, and gives birth to oneness and loyalty. When we trust each other, we are likely to reveal our deepest secrets; share the best knowledge we have and transfer valuable information to our spouse.

Counselor's Case Study: A young man in his mid-forties met a young professional woman in her late thirties. The two dated for about 1 year before getting married. The man lived in overseas while the young lady lived in one of the cities in Africa. After they got married, she was waiting to process her visa to join him overseas, the young woman resigned from her job and invested her severance pay in real estate without informing her husband. She did not disclose this information to her husband until her husband found out about it while searching for documents to adjust her status in the new country.

Counselor's Question #3:

Why do you think this young lady kept the purchase of the house a secret?

Counselor's Question #4:

You are a marriage counselor to this couple, and they have asked you to advise them on what they should do.

1. What should the young man do with that information?
2. What should the young woman do now that her husband has found out about the investment?
3. If both came to you for counseling, what would you counsel both to do?
4. Can you guess why the woman kept the information about the investment secret?
5. What role if any does culture play in this case?
6. Is this a big deal, not a big deal or a deal breaker?

D. 7 Keys to Active Listening Skill

Effective communication begins with active listening.

1. Listen with all your senses
2. Focus on the speaker. Attention leads to connection
3. Speak only when you have the undivided attention of the listener
4. Seek to clarify positions and information
5. Listen to all communication channels
6. Stay in the now
7. Think of the big picture

Summary of Session.

As a marriage counselor, your role is to remove the barriers that hinder individuals from communicating in marriage. We can accomplish that goal by highlighting the importance of communication, teaching communication skills or suggestion points of improvement to your client.

Chapter 5

Money

Where it Ends

The Love of Money is the root of all Marital Evil

Learning Objectives.

- What is Money?
- Money and Me
- Money and Marriage: It's My Money
- Money and Marriage: It's Our Money
- Examine Three Couples Accounting Systems
- Learn Practical Steps to Achieving Unity in Finance

A. What is Money?

Money is a medium for the exchange of goods and services. The word money is also used to describe the assets, properties, and resources owned by someone or some entity. Money is valuable because it can be used to purchase nearly any commodity and service. It is important to note that people have an emotional attachment to money.

B. Money and Me

Despite the meaning of money as a medium of exchange, money means different things to different people based on individual expectations and needs. For instance, those who need security see money as security; those who value joy and happiness see money as a tool for joy and

happiness, those who value fame see money as a channel of achieving fame. What we think of money determines what we do with money.

List five things that money means to you.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

You may wonder why couples have different views of money? The short answer is that we have different views to money because we are different individuals. The long answer is the meaning we make of life, including money is based on our personalities, families of origin, experiences, and orientation. It is not uncommon for two siblings who were raised by the same parents in the same environment to have a different view of money. We have three children, one is a spendthrift, always managing money, another one spends it as it come while one is neither a spendthrift nor a shopaholic.

C. Money and Marriage: It's My Money

Research has shown that money has not been a friend of marriage and family building. Money is the number one reason why divorce happens in a seemingly happy marriage with over 89% of all divorce and broken homes traced to money and money matters. Money and money matters affect the rich and the poor, the young and the old, Christians and none Christians. The result of this is that each spouse get into marriage with their preconceived ideas of how to manage or handle money and this ultimately

wrecks their family relationship because there is no cohesiveness and no true understanding of money management.

Money problems in marriage manifest in five major areas

1. Who is the decision maker on money matters?
2. Who manages the money?
3. Who makes the money?
4. Lack of accounting system
5. Inability to unite divergent views of money

This shows that money is not the problem but our attitude toward money is the problem. Attitudes to money are shaped by our expectation and the meaning we make of money. Our expectations influence our actions and inaction toward money. People are willing to surrender their body to their spouse and marriage but reluctant to surrender their bank account.

D. Money and Marriage: It's Our Money

Can Money be a uniting factor? Yes, money can be used as a teambuilding tool in marriage and family engineering. Money is used as an exchange for goods and service; couples can learn to use money to form one strong united team by merging their earning power and management skills for the good of the family.

Counselor's Guide: Money can be a uniting factor if couples will handle money as is laid out in the Word of Life. In Genesis, after God made man, He looked at Adam and said, "It is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him". (Genesis 2:18 Amplified Bible) In verse 24 of the same chapter, God gives them a charge, "Therefore a man shall leave his

father and his mother and shall become united and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh". (Genesis 2:24 Amplified Bible)

Therefore, this man shall leave all else and be UNITED to this woman as one. From this scripture, it is obvious that the intention of their Creator was oneness, including in finance. They are to be UNITED and not divided in ALL areas of their lives without any external interference.

E. Examine Three Couples Accounting Systems

There are three accounting and accountability systems available to couples for marriage and family building.

1. No Couple or Family Account or Accountability
2. Joint Accounting
3. Joint Accounts

No Accounting: In this system, the couple elects not to merge their finances or be accountable to each other. In other words, the couple continues the status quo as if they are still single. They agree to be united in bed but stay separate in money and accounting. The philosophy behind no accounting system is that the money is my money.

Joint Accounting: In this system, husband and wife may or may not join their accounts but hold each other accountable to a varying degree. Access and information about each other's earning, spending and management of money may or may not be disclosed. The philosophy behind joint accounting is that money is primarily "my money" and secondarily our money.

Joint Accounts: In this system of account, husband and wife join their earning, management, and control of their money. In practice, this means that both husband and wife have equal access, 100% contribution of their

income, share decision making, control, and management. Although this appears to be congruent with the concept of oneness, it must be noted that this system requires the parties to have a “coupling mindset” and secured emotional maturity otherwise, couples joint accounts are susceptible to abuse. Nevertheless, money can be a uniting factor for those who desire oneness with their spouse.

Counselor's Question #1 :

What is your take on Joint Accounts? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining a Joint Account?

What about joint accounting? What do you think are the benefits and drawbacks?

F. Practical Steps to Achieving Unity in Finances

Since handling and the use of money is mostly practical and not theory, let us at this time examine some practical steps of using our finances to achieving unity in our marriages.

1. Talk about your finances.

Learn to talk freely and regularly about money with your spouse. You talk about everything else why not this one. By discussing the issue of money, you will know and understand each other's view about money especially you will come to understand what money means to your spouse and this will help you both to accommodate each other and to alleviate each other's fears in this area.

2. Merge your finances.

There has been so much debate about whether couples should have a joint account or not. Others have concluded that it will be okay to have separate individual accounts and then have one joint account just for paying bills or household expenses. We do recommend couples having a joint account because that is the way of oneness and unity as laid out in the word that we read earlier. To this requires that there be a level of trust in each other. You will need to designate one partner who is the more careful one to manage and run the account. Since you are both adults and may have personal needs, you may put yourselves on a weekly or monthly allowance and what you do with your allowance is totally up to you.

3. Be Open with Money.

The saying that what your spouse doesn't know will not hurt him/her is such a fallacy. Rather, big financial secrets can ruin a marriage. You will be shocked to know that very many couples keep big financial secrets from their spouses to their own detriment.

4. Learn to give.

Part of the reason why couples are not very open with money is insecurity. If you know that you and your spouse have so much money that even in your lifetime you will not be able to scratch one-tenth of all the money you have, would you be secretive about it? The answer is NO. Therefore, one way to ensure enough money is by giving. Proverbs 11:24-26(Amplified Bible); 2 Corinthians 9:6-6 (Amplified Bible)

Having read these scriptures, you see that you cannot afford not to be a giver. You and your spouse will do yourselves a great deal of service to give especially giving your tithes which is one-tenth of all your income to

wherever God lays in your heart to give it, where you regard as God's storehouse.

Failure to do this has grave consequences as we see in Malachi 3:8-12 (Amplified Bible), "Will a man rob or defraud God? Yet you rob and defraud Me. But you say, in what way do we rob or defraud You? [You have withheld your] tithes and offerings. You are cursed with the curse, for you are robbing Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes (the whole tenth of your income) into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now by it says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer [insects and plagues] for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine drop its fruit before the time in the field, says the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you happy and blessed, for you shall be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts."

5. Learn to save and invest wisely.

It is not wise to eat with ten fingers as the elders say. Even if you have a great career, earn a comfortable living, and don't have to worry about debt, you could find yourself woefully unprepared for an emergency. Couples should have an emergency stash of three to six months' worth of living expenses held in a safe place. Besides savings, couples should also work on wise investments. It is advisable that couples sit down and talk about their investment goals and time frames.

6. Keep the spending in check.

Spending is the second most common reason why couples fight. What usually happens is that one spouse gets labeled the "spender" and is blamed for skimming all the money out the checkbook. In most cases, however, that's not accurate. It's a known fact that men and women spend the same, they just spend on different things. The solution here is to identify the real problem, which is that you're both spending money on a tight budget. Then sit down and decide how much money you'll allocate to the daily needs of life, and how much to save for the big purchases. Budget, Budget, Budget. Spontaneous spending should be highly discouraged.

Chapter 6

Intimacy

Where it Continues

The Word says that the two shall become one flesh. After you have developed an effective communication skill, the next thing in the process of marriage is to use that communication skill to communicate and understand your spouse. The language skills we acquired will help us to communicate our deepest feelings and exchange information for building that successful marriage. God may have made you for each other, but you have to understand each other before you can succeed. It is not enough that you are meant for each other, you have to understand where you complement each other. Your spouse is supposed to compliment you in the areas of your life that you need help and that makes for one formidable team.

Counselor's Guide: If communication is the engine that powers the relationship between husband and wife, intimacy is the oil that lubricates it. Quality romance and intimacy between a husband and wife reduces conflict between the couple. Without satisfying intimacy, the engine of the relationship runs rough; the body runs slow and ultimately grinds to a halt.

The more intimate a couple is, the easier it is to survive and even thrive in the world. Intimacy is a deeper level of communication that is exclusive

to the couple. An intimate relationship is an interpersonal relationship that involves four areas:

1. **Physical or Emotional Intimacy** is the level of intimacy where the couple understands each other's feelings. Your spouse does not need to say a word before you understand how he/she is feeling. This is an important process in building a successful marriage because what we say is only 7% of what we are saying.
2. **Spiritual Intimacy** is also a higher level of communication and understanding on spiritual matters. One way to notice spiritual intimacy is your communication with God on matters concerning the marriage and the household. Husband and wife are the pastors and co-pastors of the church in their house. They must develop the right spiritual chemistry to minister to their household.
3. **Social Intimacy.** This is enjoying each other's company. As we saw earlier on one of the purposes of marriage is companionship. If you hate to be around each other or can't get along, it is a sign that you are not building a successful marriage. Most successful couples would rather be with each other fighting than, have fun with anybody else.
4. **Intellectual Intimacy.** This is the level of intimacy at which you respect each other's intellect whether you appreciate it or not. I am a Phlegmatic-melancholy by character trait, but my wife is sanguine-choleric, and that is very evident in the way we think. I think outside the box, but my wife sees things the way they are. That process of thinking fascinated me at the beginning of our relationship, but that quickly became a nightmare after we got married. This continued until

we learned to respect each other's intellect. I may not understand it, but I sure do respect it now. It's a level of intimacy that allows us to discuss issues and arrive at a solution or conclusion and at the same time building synergy.

When a husband and his wife are intimate in all four areas, the result is magical. That's when you call your spouse on the phone, and he/she says, "I just picked up the phone to call you", or I was just thinking about you. Some call it telepathy but the real thing is that the soul is becoming one.

Counselor's Question #1:

Can you list the areas of intimacy noted above in their order of priority?

Counselor's Question #2:

What are the consequences of not connecting intimately on a spiritual level and how does a couple bridge the gap?

1. _____
2. _____

Counselor's Question #3:

How can lack of social/intellectual intimacy negatively affect a couple?

Counselor's Question #4:

Can a couples' lack of physical intimacy negatively affect their sex life? If so how?

Counselor's Question #5:

What is the difference if any between Intimacy and Sex?

Counselor's Guide: Sex has both spiritual significance and physical value. A marriage union is signed and sealed but not delivered until it is

consummated by the couple. Any marriage that is not consummated is legally voidable and can be annulled as if it never existed. Understand this; Sex is God's idea not man's idea.

Counselor's Guide: Sex is an important part of the marriage relationship invented, designed, and formulated by our Maker and it's nothing for anyone to be ashamed of, but to have ultimate pleasure in it. There is nothing dirty or unclean about the sexual relationship between a man and his wife; it is as clean as having a church fellowship, in fact, there is no greater fellowship than a man and his wife having sexual intercourse. A marriage relationship in which there is no sexual relationship, except for medical or physiological reasons, is not fulfilling the purpose of God.

Counselor's Question #6:

According to Genesis 1:28, what was the first charge God gave Adam and Eve after creation? _____

When God made Adam and Eve, He gave them charge to: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth" (Genesis 1:28 The Message). So we see God's first instruction to Adam and Eve to Reproduce! For there to be reproduction, there has to be coupling...sex.

Counselor's Question #7:

When does sex become filthy and unpleasurable?

Counselor's Question #8:

Sex is a gift a man gives to his wife and vice versa.

- Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Maybe - Agree - Strongly Agree

Counselor's Question #9:

Sex at its best is only a physical matter.

- Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Maybe - Agree - Strongly Agree

Counselor's Guide: The marriage bed must remain honorable at all times.

“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). God is against a married man or woman defiling the marriage bed at any given time either by adultery or fornication. He made sex to be enjoyed by the man and his wife, which did not include a third party. Man has dictated to the world what sex should be. But unfortunately, this is not the idea of God, and as such, God Himself frowns at and judges illicit sex.

“There's more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much a spiritual mystery as it is a physical fact. As written in the Scripture, "The two become one” (I Corinthians 6:16 The Message).

Sex as God's idea goes beyond the physical. It is a soulful experience as well as spiritual. God never intended sexual intercourse to be a free for all act. God detests free for all sex. Sex as God intended it is for pleasure and reproduction between a husband and his wife.

Counselor's Question #10:

What are the consequences of adultery and fornication?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 10:8; Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 6:16, 18

THE PURPOSE OF SEX

1. Sealing the covenant

Marriage is a covenant not a contract. Every covenant has a seal. The marriage covenant is not exempt from this. The sexual relationship between a man and his wife is the celebration of that seal of the marriage covenant. In the time of old, covenant is not binding until it is sealed with blood. Well, that is what we see in the marriage covenant.

Counselor's Case Study: A young lady who is zealous for the Lord and is also single, met a young man who is equally zealous for the Lord and single in the church. She wrote, "There is this guy who has been approaching me as a friend in the church. From what I see, we are really committed to and compatible with each other, and I see that he is doing his best so that we can remain together. But, there is one thing that he wants us to do and it's for us to have sex....which I don't want to do unless we both get married...but later I realize that what he has been telling me is what he really have in mind to do when we are both together...which is to have sex with me." This young girl approaches you for counseling and has the following questions:

Counselor's Questions #11:

- a) Do you think that what he really wants to do (have sex) might be the right choice for me to make?
- b) Is it okay for a couple to have sex then later marry each other?
- c) How do I deal with the pressure he brings every day to me?
- d) How can he be a church worker and still want to have sex with me?

- e) How can I avoid giving in to these pressures?
- f) What if she eventually gives in to the pressure, and is worried that her virginity is lost and what else does she have to present to her future husband assuming the young man leaves her?
- g) 2. Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

2. Procreation

One of the primary purposes of the sexual relationship between a man and his wife is that of procreation. God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and to multiply, to reproduce after their kind. So, we see that sexual union is a channel whereby multiplication is achieved here on earth. It takes coupling together in a sexual union for children to be brought forth. That was exactly what Adam and Eve did. Genesis 4:1

3. Pleasure

“Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at **all times**; And always be **enraptured** with her love” (Proverbs 5:18-19).

The word enraptured means to be literarily intoxicated with her love that is pleasure. Sexual intimacy was designed by God to give a man and his wife the highest form of sensual pleasure. The whole of the book of Songs of Solomon is dedicated to the celebration of love between a man and his wife.

Counselor's Questions #12:

What are some of the sexual perversions of today and how does God view them?

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

4. Recreation

Sex and intimacy can be the best sport a man can ever play with his wife. It can be compared to tennis, or golf. The same way you train for these other sports is the same way you train for sex and intimacy. On the other hand, the same benefit you receive from these sports is the same benefit you receive from sex and intimacy. Isaac caught this vision and decided that even though he found himself in a foreign land, in the presence of famine; he would continue to “sport” with his wife like he had always done at home.

Genesis 26:8

HOW TO RE-IGNITE THE PASSION IN YOUR SEX LIFE

Here are some pointers that may need to be practiced daily or as often as possible to keep re-igniting the passion in the bedroom.

1. Create a Positive Atmosphere for intimacy
2. Maintain a regular date night
3. Try something new
4. Understand the men and women differences

Chapter 7

Managing Conflicts in Marriage and Relationships

Picking Up the Pieces

The best time to fight for your marriage is now

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the nature of conflict in marriage?
- Understand that Conflicts are unavoidable.
- Learn the 5 Keys for Managing Conflict in Marriage
- Understand the 3 “Ds” of Conflict Prevention

Counselors Guide

- Couples cannot eliminate conflict in their relationship.
- We can minimize the frequency and severity of conflicts

A. The Nature of Conflict in Marriage?

A conflict is a disagreement between two or more individuals. Conflicts are offenses that are unresolved, differences of opinions that are not reconciled and offenses that are unforgiven.

Every conflict starts with the mind and manifests in a verbal altercation or physical actions. Conflicts are characterized by anger, resentment, displeasure, justified, right, misunderstood, insult or affront. Conflict arises in the family between husband or wife, parent and child, the family and none members of the family.

We must be intentional about resolving conflicts in marriage and family because, unless we resolve to make peace a high priority, we will always have reason to talk back, fight back, get what we want and/or insist on our own ways.

B. Understand that Conflicts are unavoidable in Marriage

Marriage is a 24/7 365 intimate and intense relationship that involves all facets of your life. There is no break or leave of absence from marriage for a lifetime. The word marriage is derived from the Anglo-French word “marier” which literally means to cause to fit together. It underscores the differentiation of the individuals going through the process of becoming one. Matthew 18:7, Romans 12:18, Romans 14:19. Hebrews 12:18, Matthew 5:9. Under the circumstance, conflicts are unavoidable because Marriage is a union of two individuals who are different, but the same with different perspectives, feelings, language, personalities, and different orientation from family of origin and life experiences.

Conflicts exist in marriage from the beginning of relationships, but young couples fail to see those disagreements as conflicts. Couples who recognize the arguments and disagreements as potential conflict often are preoccupied with themselves to address the reason for the arguments and disagreement during courtship.

C. Five Keys for Managing Conflict in Marriage

1. Identify the Individual Conflict Management and resolution Style

Understand the role that temperament and family background or orientation play in conflict management and conflict resolution. Marriage is a union of the unwilling who are drawn to each other by desires and

interests. The success of the union depends on the couple's willingness to work out their differences and negotiate the rules of engagement in the union.

Temperament and orientation from our family of origin affect our worldview and how we react to events including offenses and potential conflicts. Some of the synonyms for the word suitable listed in Merriam Webster dictionary for the word suitable as follows: Fit, Suitable, Meet, Proper and Appropriate.

2. Identify the Roles and Responsibilities in the Family

There is a difference between the role that members play in the family and the traditional responsibilities assigned to the members in the family. The roles are what the members do in the family. For example, the accountant, the disciplinarian, the spiritual person, and the morality chief are roles in the family. The spouse who takes out the trash may not be the spouse responsible for the taking out of the trash.

Responsibility refers to your obligation to the family. For instance, husbands and fathers have the traditional responsibilities of being an income earner and the head of the family who provide leadership in the family. Often, the wife and mother are the nurturers and bring balance and mediation in the family. Often, these roles change.

Counselor's Guide

In every married couple, one spouse is a peacemaker, and one is a peace dweller. A peacemaker is a spouse who initiates a peace process between the couple most of the time. The peacemaker spouse is usually

uncomfortable with stalemates and silent treatments. This role is influenced by the individual's temperament, maturity, and spiritual growth.

On the other hand, a peace dweller is a spouse who rarely initiates peace process or apologizes. Although the peace dweller does not often initiate peace, he/she welcomes peace for the sake of peace in the house. The temperament of the peace dweller helps him to be alone for a longer period, but their inability to create their own excitement compels him/her to accept peace. Please note that both roles are critical for conflict resolution in the family.

When it comes to conflicts, one spouse is usually the peacemaker while the other spouse is the peace dweller. Can you identify the peacemaker and peace dweller in your family?

3. Control what You Control (CWYC)

Learn to focus on what is within your control. Marriage is not a 50/50 equation but 100% sacrifice. Don't go into marriage expecting a win-win situation. That means that sometimes you must apologize even though you did not do anything wrong.

4. Nip It on the Bud

Early Intervention is critical to conflict management. Conflicts arise when offenses escalate because of unresolved offenses. When we manage disagreements and offenses, they hardly become conflicts. It is always very important that we see conflict brewing and nip it in the bud. It is said that a stitch in time saves nine other stitches. Remember that every conflict has an incubation period. Early intervention reduces further escalation and saves

time. By preventing one conflict, you reduce the potentials for several other conflicts.

D. The 3 “Ds” of Conflict Prevention.

The 3 “Ds” principles for conflict prevention are:

- Decide.
- Discover.
- Determine.

DECIDE: The first “D” of the three principles of conflict management is Decide. Decide from the beginning of your marriage to be at peace with your spouse no matter the cost and sacrifice. Unless you resolve to make peace a high priority, you will always have reason to fight back, get what we want and/or insist on our own ways. In marriage, you learn to apologize when you did something good and when you did something bad.

Counselor’s Question #1:

Can you remember some instances when you apologized even though you did not do anything wrong and did not initiate the potential conflict in any way?

Counselor’s Question #2:

Can you imagine being at peace with your spouse always and forever? Do you think it’s worth making up your mind to avoid potential conflict?

DISCOVER: The second “D” Principle is Discover. Discovering areas of disagreement will help you in avoiding conflict with your spouse. We all have our values, interests, and dislikes. Almost all conflicts arise from how much value to allocate to our interests. If we take time to identify what our

spouse like and/or dislike, we can then allocate appropriate resources of time and money to it.

Counselor's Question #3:

1. What are those areas of conflict you have with your spouse?

Take a minute to think about it.

2. Share with the group one area of constant or potential conflict with your spouse.

Hint: Birthdays, watching sports, shopping, talking too much, too many friends, wrong friends, etc.

DETERMINE: The third "D" principle is to determine what action to take. It is not enough to DECIDE to be at peace with your spouse and DISCOVER areas of constant and/or potential conflicts. We must also determine how to handle the areas or issues. Remember, every conflict has an incubation period. Early intervention prevents further development.

What should you do before conflict occurs in your marriage again?

a) _____

b) _____

Counselor's Case Study: A young man and his fiancés went for premarital counseling just a few days before their wedding. The woman's parents have lived apart for a considerable number of years, but the man's parents have always lived together in the same location. During the counseling, it became clear that the man and the lady cannot agree on where they will live. The young man expects the woman to resign from her job and relocate to the city where he lives. The young lady insists on relocating only after she secures her dream job. In the alternative, she suggested that her fiancés should

relocate to where she currently lives until she can secure the right job. Both the man and the woman can find a job in both cities.

Counselor's Question #4

As a marriage counselor:

1. How would you characterize this? Disagreement or conflict?
2. What does this information tell you about this couple?
3. What is the best way to manage and/or resolve this conflict?

Who is the best person to help this couple? The Pastor or Parents?

Chapter 8

Resolving Conflicts in Marriage and Relationships

Picking up the Pieces

We don't have irreconcilable differences, but we have selfish and self-centered people

Learning Objectives

- Understand the nature of Conflicts in Marriage and Family
- Assess the Parties in the Conflict
- Assess the Nature of the Conflicts
- Understand the importance of early intervention
- Understand the 5-Step Conflict Resolution Model
- Learn How to Use Couple's Conflict to Enrich Marriages

Counselors Guide:

- Help Couples to separate their emotions from their objective and focus on the big picture.

Conflicts in Marriage and Family

People start their marriage journey completely unaware of how often conflicts in marriage and family happen. They soon discover that the gentleman they married a few days ago has a monster in him, or the

Proverbs 31 woman they prayed for and thought they received has a Jezebel in her. The nature of dating and courting is that people are courteous during courting and real in marriage. While dating, you present your best, but in marriage you present yourself. What happens during the first few weeks and months of marriage scare a lot of people with anger, resentment, and a sense of betrayal.

Proverbs 24:3 Model

Conflict resolution accounts for more than 85% of a marriage Counselor's work. Unfortunately, research shows that marriage and family counseling have the lowest success rate among all the counseling in the world.

Are You Equipped and Certified?

We are not talking about certificates, but about certification. Have you undergone any study, understudied any professional or expert? How many books on marriage and family counseling have you read? What theoretical persuasion do you hold? Unfortunately, most marriage counselors are not trained in the art of counseling and those who are trained were only trained to encourage and pray for couples, support couples emotionally and spiritually.

Counselors lack the information, skills, resources, and commitment that is necessary for conflict resolution. In the absence of these necessary skills and information, marriage counselors default to spiritual bypasses like "praying and fasting" declaring words of wisdom as a one size fit all solution for all marriage and family conflicts. They prescribe pain medication for stomach diarrhea which does more harm than it helps.

Couples in Crisis, Families in Disarray

People start their marriage unaware that marriage is a very intimate and intense relationship in which you are stuck with your spouse 24/7, 365 days for the rest of your life. They have been in “lala land” while dating and courting (the phase of romance) and now they are confronted with reality). They wonder whether marriage is all it’s cracked up to be (rethinking their marriage).

To make matters worse couples and families seek professional help after they have tried other things. Nine out of ten couples who ask for your help have tried ignoring each other, minimized their problems, used self-help, friend help, pastoral help, and family help before seeking professional help. The effect of this is that often, the professional is dealing with marriages in coma or families in disarray.

Intake and Assessment of the Case

You may be wondering why we are focusing on assessment at this time of the program? Assessment goes hand in hand with intake (admission) when you are gathering information from the client and other sources. Assessment of presenting problems includes observing the client, actively listening to the client, showing empathy to the client, and starting the process of building a therapeutic alliance in the relationship.

Keep in mind that clients typically present their symptoms and expect you to figure out the source or origin of the problem. For instance, the couple may talk about arguing all the time or their love life growing cold without telling you more. Part of a thorough assessment is to perform preliminary marriage checkups and/or lifestyle checkups that will provide more

information on the personalities, the meaning they make of marriage and family of origin. Effective counseling starts with comprehensive information gathering.

Part of your intake process is to observe and identify the couple's conflict handling style. Behaviorist Dr. Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann came up with five conflict-handling styles and its implication for relationships.

1. **Competing:** Wants to win at all costs. Values winning more than the relationship
2. **Accommodating:** Sets aside personal interest to please others. Values relationship higher than winning.
3. **Compromising:** Ignores or withdraws from conflict. Interesting in 50/50 outcome. Moderately values relationship.
4. **Avoidant:** Hopes the conflict will resolve itself. May be perceived as nonchalant. Has low value for the relationship and self-interest.
5. **Collaborating:** Sees conflict as a problem that needs to be addressed. Is willing to go outside the box to solve problems. Values relationship highly. Motto: I win, you win, we win.

Counselor's Question #1

As a helping hand what should be your initial goals when performing assessment that will be used for resolving couple conflict?

1. _____
2. _____

Counselor's Guide: The most important thing in conflict resolution is to gain and maintain the trust of both parties. Staying neutral in the conflict is crucial

to successful conflict resolution. People came to you because they trust you. As a marriage counselor people entrust you with their deepest secrets. You have a professional responsibility to keep those secrets. As soon as you begin counseling each of the parties think you are being partial.

Counselor's Guide: Examine yourself by asking this question, "Can I objectively counsel couples who are going through what I went through? Have I truly gotten over my own hurt or am I so hurt that I need help? If you cannot answer that question in the affirmative, you are not ready to accept such counseling.

Five-Step Conflict Resolutions

The Abraham Model for Conflict Resolution: Genesis 13:1-1

1. Early Intervention
2. Call for a Meeting
3. Start with the Big Picture
4. Propose Solutions
5. Close the deal.

The importance of Early Intervention

Early Intervention is also critical to conflict resolution as it is for conflict prevention, conflict resolution and reducing the risk of conflicts escalating to crisis in the family. The definition of a failed marriage is the inability to reconcile differences.

For instance, a young woman complained about her husband of two years coming home late from work and working even on weekends. Nobody paid attention to her complaint instead everybody advised her to deal with

the situation and be thankful for a hardworking husband. As time went on the young man started traveling on weekend and claimed that it was job-related. Still, nobody took notice that the young man is not coming to church and connecting with anybody. One day the young man left for work in the morning and never came back.

Apparently, the young man met somebody at work, and all those stories about working late were spending time with the other woman. It took another six months of intervention from friends, family members, church members before the young man came home, but at that time the damage had already been done. His wife felt humiliated and insulted. She had a hard time forgiving him and eventually they had to divorce. This whole thing could have been avoided with early intervention when the young man was just staying out late.

Call For A Meeting

Providing an opportunity for all concerned parties to clarify their position and express their frustration, advance the course of conflict resolution. As a helping hand, your most important role at this phase of the process is to provide a trusting neutral platform for mediating, counseling or pastoring.

Focus on the Big Picture

One of the challenging roles of a helping hand in conflict resolution is to keep the parties focused on the important things. This is important because conflicts are mostly a distraction from the main thing or a temporary minimizing of the value of the relationship. Studies have shown that about 52% of those who divorced their spouse regret their action after 2 years.

Reminding the parties of the good memories like how they met, honeymoon experiences they shared together, adversities they overcame and those that though they thought they wouldn't make it and blessings of the marriage like children, spirituality, their vision, family, etc help in the negotiation.

Present an Acceptable Solution.

Creativity and optimism are two essentials for conflict resolution. When people feel there is no door out, you show them a window that can be turned into a door. When couples see darkness, you show them new dawn coming. As a helping hand, your success in resolving conflicts depends on how creative you can be in presenting your clients to see alternative solutions.

Actively listening to the parties earns their attention and trust and helps you to understand their story, position, fears, and source of strength. The information you gathered about the parties helps with offering them acceptable solutions.

Always start with setting ground rules for the meeting. Ask the parties if it's okay to pray before the session and if possible, have the parties pray openly about their desired outcome. Give all the parties equal opportunities to express themselves.

Close the Deal.

Closing the deal is you reminding the parties of the benefit of resolving the conflict, and if they are spiritual people, you might talk about the spirituality here. Restate what was agreed, provide instructions on who is entitled to what, who is obligated to what and the timelines for performance. You may want to schedule a follow-up session in future to review the matrix.

Counselor's Guide: Every couple has one peacemaker and one peace-dweller. A peacemaker is a person who is always initiating peace process. He/She is extremely uncomfortable with gridlock and stalemate and silent treatments. It is as often a result of temperament, maturity, and spiritual growth. A peace dweller is the one who is open to a peace initiative for the sake of peace in the house. Peace dweller just wants to be left alone, and in peace, so they agree to make peace. Both roles are very important for conflict resolution.

Counselor's Question #2:

Reading the story of Abraham and Lot in Genesis chapter 13, why was Abraham's peace proposal effective in resolving the conflict?

Counselor's Guide: Conflicts inherently come with self-centeredness, distrust, and fear. The person initiating the peace has to be objective, sacrificial and willing to go the extra mile to gain the trust of the other party.

Counselor's Question #3:

Why did Lot accept Abraham's conflict resolution initiative?

Counselor's Question #4:

What were Abraham's rewards for being a Peacemaker? Can you think of using the blessings of making peace to close a conflict resolution deal?

Counselor's Guide: Everybody likes to be appreciated and rewarded for his work. Highlighting the rewards for peace and the consequences of not making peace is an effective carrot that can be offered to the peacemaker and the peace dweller.

Counselor's Guide: Ask your client couple to commit to following the process that Abraham followed in resolving the potential conflict with Lot. It is important to frequently remind ourselves that we made a resolution to be at peace with our spouse and family members. Remember the areas of constant and potential conflict. Take Responsibility for the actions you decided to take and then Decide, Discover, and Determine.

Chapter 9

Setting Boundaries in Marriage

Set Boundaries and defend it

A lack of boundaries invites a lack of respect – unknown

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the meaning of Boundaries
- Learn How to Use Boundaries to build Marriages
- Identify Boundaries That Kill Marriages
- Learn How to Set & Defend Boundaries
- Setting Boundaries for Special Population

Counselors Guide

- To identify boundaries issues and educate couples on the importance of boundaries in marriage and family engineering.
- A good marital and family building is a boundary that is mutually agreed, jointly announced, and collectively defended.

Understanding the Meaning of Boundaries

1. What are boundaries?

Boundaries, as it relates to marriage and families, are imaginary lines that define how family members relate with each other. For instance, how husband and wife relate, how parents relate with their children, how children interact with each other, how the nuclear family interacts with extended family, friends, and others.

Boundaries are based on degrees of proximity, intimacy, affiliation, consanguinity, influence, triangulations, enmeshment, roles, and responsibilities. Boundaries are also influenced the by a spiritual belief system, the meaning we make of marriage and the agreement we negotiated with our spouse.

Historically, marriage was viewed as an institution. People married families and destinies, and not individuals. Today we marry individuals and not their families, but even when we assume that we are marrying an individual, we end up marrying the individual and his/her family since every individual is a microcosm of his/her families of origin. When marriage is defined as an institution, the boundary line is defined by culture, customs, and tradition.

When marriage is defined as nuclear, the boundary is rigid, but when marriage is defined as inclusive of other people, the boundary is elastic. Boundaries that are established with the vision of the couple in mind are not seen as restrictive. Such boundaries are a means to an end, a vehicle for achieving the vision of the couple. For instance, couples who believe that marriage is between a man and a woman only set boundaries rigid enough to exclude friends and extended family members. On the other hand, couples who believe that marriage includes the extended family members set loose and porous boundaries. Couples who believe that marriage is according to their definition of marriage set boundaries that align with their interest and visions.

2. Three Kinds of Boundaries

➤ Diffused Boundaries

A diffused boundary occurs when two subsystems have no clear-cut differentiation resulting in indifference and roles/responsibility confusion. Another name for rigid boundary is “enmeshment”.

➤ **Rigid Boundaries.**

A rigid boundary is one in which the wall is the differentiation and is so strong that the resources available to one subsystem are not available to another subsystem. Another term for rigid boundary is “disengagement”.

➤ **Adaptive Boundaries.**

An adaptive boundary is one in which the members can act on behalf of the family and for the benefit of the family without fear of reprisals. In other words, the resource of one member is available to other members when acting in the interest of the family. This is the ideal boundary for healthy coupling and family building.

Clients' Questions

Have you established boundaries in your marriage and family? How did you establish the boundaries?

Boundaries Build Marriage

1. Establishing Order

Boundaries are useful for establishing order both internally between individual rights and responsibilities in life and externally between family members and others outside the nuclear family. Parents who teach their children to knock before entering their bedroom are establishing boundaries and order that although we live in the same house, some things are private. Now if the same rule is not observed by the parents when entering the child's room, it negates the rule being used to maintain hierarchy and value.

2. Establishing Hierarchy

Boundaries are useful for establishing hierarchy and pecking orders in a family when boundaries are selectively enforced, or it applies to only a selected few. For instance, if a couple announces that no one is allowed to bring their friends home without permission and to notify other members of the family ahead of time, but grandma frequently visits without permission. Those boundaries are no longer used for establishing order but for establishing a hierarchy of importance. As a marriage counselor, your assessment should include the presence or absence of boundaries in the family. Remember a lack of boundary leads to a lack of respect for marital status, parents, children, spouse, and the nuclear family. A diffused or rigid boundary will lead to other problems in the family.

3. Establishing New Beginning

Boundaries are necessary for separating a new family from the existing family. There is a spiritual implication for starting on a clean slate. Genesis 2:24, 12:1-4,

“No one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the old wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskin is ruined. But new wine must be put in a new wineskin, and both be preserved” Luke 5:37-38. See also. Matt 9:14-18, Luke 5:36-39 and Mark 2:18-22.

4. Protects Treasures

Helps us to establish and protect the things that are important to us. We protect things that are unique to us like our individuality, our marriage, children, vision, family and control inflow and outflow of information. Just as a fence or wall goes around a property and corals, people, and animal

toward the gate, so does a boundary control the flow of information about the family. Children are taught by parents to keep family secrets in the family.

5. Fosters Differentiation and Growth

Boundaries foster individuation, differentiation, growth, and diversity of resources in the family. Boundaries help to separate individuals from subsystems and subsystems from systems. Boundaries allow us to be who we desire to be and establish the kind of marriage we desire to establish without interference from outsiders.

6. Enhances Allocation of Resources

Boundaries help to control the resources and wealth created by the family for the benefit of the family. Effective boundaries help a couple to judiciously allocate available resources in accordance with the vision of the family.

7. Enhances Focus

Boundaries help us to define our roles and responsibilities bearing in mind the difference between role and responsibility in marriage. A role is what a member does for the family while responsibility is what a member is supposed to do for the family. Another way to know the difference is that roles are creatures of convenience or inconvenience while responsibilities are created by culture, orientation or law.

Boundaries control ingress and therefore, allow the members to focus on their interest without distraction. You must have heard the quote by Lewis Carroll that “If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you

there” If you don’t have a personal or couple meaning of marriage, you cannot set a boundary for the marriage.

Boundaries That Kill Marriages

➤ **Porous Boundaries Kill Marriages**

Porous boundaries are undefended boundaries or boundaries that are easy to breach. Think about a house that has no fence, wall or perimeter security around it. A family living on open door policy whereby extended family members, friends or acquaintances can come and go as they please and members of the family do whatever they like without consequences is a porous boundary.

➤ **Rigid boundaries stifle individuals**

A rigid boundary is a boundary that does not accommodate changes in the family. A typical example is a family that does not reward the children with more responsibility and decision making role as they grow older. For instance, an immigrant father refuses to allow his female children to apply for a driver’s license until they are 21 years of age. Another example is a parent who is strict with their children end up with children who make all kinds of mistakes in college.

➤ **Unilateral Boundaries Kill Marriages**

Unilateral boundaries are boundaries that are set by one member of the family without the support of the other members of the family. Unilateral boundaries are typically imposed on the family by one spouse. For instance, we had a client who said that she has the right to go out with her ex-husband no matter what her husband thinks or says.

➤ **Selectively enforced Boundaries create distrust**

Boundaries that are selectively enforced are confusing to the members of the family and build up resentment and stifle growth. A typical example is a parent who has a favorite child who cannot do any wrong. We had a client whose husband made a rule that banned their parents from visiting them. A few years into their marriage, the husband wanted to invite his parent to visit and stay for a few days. Our client refused and threatened to call the police on her husband's parents.

Setting Boundaries in Marriage

1. Define your Marriage

Answering these questions is helpful in defining marriage:

- What does marriage (relationship) mean to you?
- What is the purpose or vision of your marriage (relationship)?
- Who inspires you and your spouse in marriage or relationship matters?

Setting boundaries in marriage are determined by our spiritual belief system, the meaning we make of marriage and our agreement we negotiated with our spouse. Historically marriage was viewed as an institution. People marry families and destinies and not individuals. Even when we assume that we are marrying our spouse and not our spouse family, we are still marrying the extended family because every one of us is a microcosm of our family. When marriage is defined as an institution, their boundary line is defined by culture, customs, and tradition.

When marriage is defined as exclusive of others and individualized, the boundary is rigid; when marriage is defined as inclusive of other people, the boundaries are elastic. When marriage is aligned with the vision of the

couple, boundaries are invariably adaptive. For instance, couples who believe that marriage is between a man and a woman only, set boundaries rigid enough to exclude friends and extended family members.

On the other hand, couples who believe that marriage includes the extended family members set loose and porous boundaries. The couple who believe that marriage is according to their definition of marriage set boundaries that align with their interest and visions.

2. Start from the InnerMost Circle

Setting effective boundary requires personal discipline and commitment. If you desire to set an effective boundary, you must have the courage to exclude what and those who are important to you. Jesus had the beloved, the three, the twelve and then the multitude.

The first principle for establishing marriage was about boundary and who is included in our innermost circle. "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one". Genesis 2:24. One flesh implies monogamy between the man and his wife, and it also implies that they are a pair to the exclusion of others. We must start from personal boundaries and progress to other boundaries.

3. Setting and Defending Boundaries

Just as a property owner sets up boundary markers, fences, and walls to demarcate his property from other properties, we need to set personal, couple, family, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual boundaries to define and delineate us, our marriage and our family. When we fail to set and defend appropriate boundaries, our perspective and visions are blurred, and the value of our ownership is diminished.

4. Setting and Defending Individual Boundaries

Individual boundaries are based on our choices and self-concept. Setting personal boundary requires a clear understanding of our purpose in life and the pathway to that purpose.

Defending personal boundaries require discipline and conviction for the purpose. It requires the grace of God to stay on course. Those who cannot set up and defend their personal boundaries find it difficult to set and defend their marital and family boundaries. As Lewis Carroll wrote, “If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there” If you don't have a personal or couple meaning of marriage, you cannot set a boundary for the marriage.

Setting Boundaries for Special Populations

- Violent and Abusive Family Members
- Child Molestation Cases
- Family Members with Mental illness or Addiction
- Long Distance Relationships

Chapter 10

Parenting That Works

Parenting that Works

Parenting is a partnership between man and God

Learning Objectives:

- How to Set Parenting Goals
- Parenting that does not work
- Four Types of Parents
- Parenting Roles
- Parenting like God
- Parenting with God.

Counselor's Guide:

- Parenting style that work is parenting like God and parenting with God.
- Effective parenting is intentional about their parenting style.

1. Understanding Parenting Goals

For parenting to work, it must be intentional. Being intentional about parenting is having a measurable goal. Setting parenting goals require seeing the end from the beginning. Proverbs 22:6. There is a set way “a child should go”.

Parenting goals must be taken into consideration when choosing a lifetime partner. You cannot marry someone from another race and expect to have and raise a child who is not interracial.

Suggested parenting goals are Career adult, family-person, strong Christian, independent adult. What is your priority: Is it in spiritual matters, relationship matter, and career?

The only parenting style that works is God's parenting style. Yes, God is a parent too, and we are his children.

Parenting that Does Not Work

Before we talk about a parenting style that works, let me say it categorically now that these parenting styles will not work:

- ✓ No parenting style.
- ✓ Adopting your Parent's Parenting style
- ✓ Back in the day parenting style
- ✓ Community Parenting is not always good parenting.

Four Types of Parents.

There are four recognized types of parenting style. Each parenting style has its own characteristics and elucidates distinct reactions from children. The major differences are structure, expectation, discipline, democratic and non-democratic pattern of interaction,

1. Authoritarian parent
2. Authoritative parent
3. Permissive parent
4. Neglectful parent

If you desire good children, you have chosen a good partner. Your partner contributes about 50% gene to your children. Your partner influences the childrens' life, socially, spiritually, and environmentally.

Who is a parent?

A parent is a caregiver, a steward, and a progenitor.

Notice that none of those words says ownership. You don't own your children. The government does not own your children. Only God gives children, and he owns children.

Parenting with God

The only parenting style that work is parenting like God and with God.

1. You are in partnership with God. Mal 2:15, Psalm 127:3, Ruth 4:2
2. Children watch you more than they listen to you. Model Jesus Christ to them.
3. What you show your children teach them much more than what you teach them. Children see us more than they hear, they remember what they see more than what they hear.
4. You must establish healthy boundaries. Let your child be a child while you remain an adult. The idea of your child being your best friends is stealing their childhood

There are four types of parents and parenting styles

1. **The Authoritarian Parent:** Obey the last order parenting. Children are expected to follow the strict rule set by the parents. No questions and no excuse. If a child asks why the answer is usually "because I said so". Authoritarian parents are dictators and domineering. They see a child's question as a challenge to their authority. Failure to follow the rule usually has consequences. Is this how God parents us?
2. **The Uninvolved Parent:** This type of parents have few demands or expectations from their children. They communicate very little with the children. They provide basic needs of the children, shelter, food,

water but no guidance, recreation, structure, rules or even support. Is this how God parents his Children.

3. **The Permissive Parent:** Sometimes called the indulgent parents rarely discipline their children, have a low expectation of the children's growth or maturity, they respond to all the children's needs, they allow the child to do what he or she wants, avoids confrontation with the child. Permissive parents over-communicate with their children, sometimes treating a child like a friend. Sometimes the child runs the house and makes adult decisions. You may have heard some people say that their child is their best friend. Is their how God parents us?
4. **The Authoritative Parents.** Provide rules and guidelines for the children, allows for the children impute, communicates with the children, nurturing and forgiving rather than punishing, set standards and make sure the children understand it and buy into it, assertive, firm, and insistent instead of punitive or commanding