

Pre-engagement Counseling Covenant

The primary goal of pre-engagement counseling is to see if there are major issues that the couple is either unaware of, or unwilling to accept to work on should they marry. This differs from premarital in which the couple presumably has already decided to get married. While I do not know if any particular couple *should* be married, I will share if I see any major issues with getting married.

Should the couple choose to get married, I do not assume the couple is inviting me to officiate a wedding. Nor should the couple assume that I am able to do the wedding unless we specifically discuss it. I would be glad to have such a discussion if the couple so chooses.

Below are the qualifications required for what I believe would be a biblical marriage. These are not necessary to go through pre-engagement counseling. But I offer these so the couple understands my intentions and values.

I ask the prospective couple to make a covenant with each other and with me as explained below. I ask that we agree to this covenant before starting premarital counseling.

Spiritual Qualifications for Marriage (Not required for pre-engagement counseling)

1. Both must be in the same spiritual standing before God, what the Bible calls “equally yoked.”
2. Both must be free to marry based upon biblical grounds. (Never before married; widowed; or divorced upon biblical grounds. In case of divorced persons, I reserve the right, after discussion of relevant information, to determine whether I feel it appropriate for me to perform the wedding.)
3. Both must understand and (for Christians) be committed to the biblical pattern of marriage (e.g., permanency of marriage, marriage roles).
4. Both must agree to live sexually pure from the time of this covenant until the marriage ceremony.

Emotional Qualifications for Marriage (Not required for pre-engagement counseling)

1. Both must be able to understand and accept the responsibility of marriage.
2. Both must be committed to and growing in their ability to resolve interpersonal problems as guided by the wisdom of Scripture.
3. Both must have a realistic view of and appreciation for the other person.

Course of Counseling

1. Time and Sessions

- a. Counseling should begin at least 6 months prior to any possible engagement.
- b. A minimum of 4 to 6 sessions prior to any engagement. Should the couple get engaged, I would require several more sessions should the couple ask me to do their pre-marital counseling.
- c. In addition to our counseling sessions, I strongly encourage the couple to attend a marriage conference, (e.g., Family Life Conference, Marriage Builders, Home Improvement Ministries, etc.)

Note: Should more sessions be necessary to explore in greater depth areas of special need, the couple should be willing to invest the resources necessary to ensure a solid foundation for their marriage.

2. Assignments

- a. The couple may be assigned to take an inventory (such as the PREPARE/ENRICH, or Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA).
- b. The couple must acquire and work through resources related to marriage (books, recorded seminars, etc.)
- c. The couple agrees to complete other assignments given during the course of counseling.

3. Miscellaneous

- a. The pre-engagement counseling is part of my ministry and commitment to you. Because of that, and because of your own desire to have a strong marriage, I expect you to commit to spending resources needed to make a responsible covenant of marriage before God.
- b. If I sense serious concerns in the couple's relationship, I respectfully ask the couple to be open to possible new directions in the relationship.

Agreement

Having prayerfully read the above, we commit ourselves to willingly comply with these stipulations.

Print Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Enoch Liao