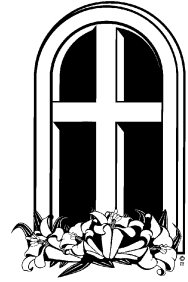


Pre-Marital Counseling Covenant



Marriage is an institution given to mankind by God and is therefore subject to the design of God. A minister, who takes upon himself the responsibility to perform the ceremony by which a man and woman covenant together before God to be united in marriage, is under obligation to see that God is honored. He must, as a man of God, be faithful to Scriptural principle as well as maintain his personal Scriptural convictions.

Pre-marital Counseling, although not mandated by Scripture, is consistent with Biblical injunctions to seek counsel in making life-long decisions. As a result, it is my policy to require a period of counseling for any couple that requests my participation in performing their wedding. The prospective couple is asked to read this covenant (or commitment) and to indicate their willingness to comply with the stipulations. Agreement of the couple is necessary before pre-marital counseling begins.

Qualifications

Spiritual Qualifications:

- (1) Both must be believers (i.e. profession of faith in Christ as Savior and evidence that their faith is genuine).
- (2) Both must be free to marry (i.e. never before married, widowed, or divorced upon Biblical grounds).

NOTE: In the case of divorced persons I reserve the right, after the discussion of relevant details, to determine whether I feel free to perform the wedding. It is my policy to decline to perform weddings when Biblical principles are violated or in a case where I am in doubt as to the permissibility of remarriage.

- (3) Both must understand and be committed to the Biblical pattern of marriage (ex. permanency of marriage, roles in marriage, etc.)
- (4) Both must agree to abstain from sexual immorality from the time of this covenant until the marriage ceremony.

NOTE: It is not possible for me to conduct pre-marital counseling if the couple is not willing to abide within the guidelines of Scripture concerning sex. Any questions related to this stipulation should be addressed to me prior to agreeing to the covenant.

Emotional Qualifications:

NOTE: The following qualifications will be assessed during the counseling process. I will make a determination of these qualifications early enough in the counseling process to allow for alternate arrangements in the event that I can not with good conscience perform the ceremony and the couple still desires to marry. Should this be the case, I ask the couple to prayerfully consider my recommendation and to respect my commitment to well founded marriages... even if then disagree with my assessment.

- (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 solve inter-personal problems Biblically.
- (3) Both must have a realistic view of and appreciation for the other person.

Course of Counseling

NOTE: Exceptions to the following may be made when extenuating circumstances warrant. However, the couple should plan upon completing the entire course of counseling.

Time and Sessions:

- (1) Counseling should begin at least three months prior to the intended wedding date (more lead time is desirable).
- (2) A minimum of four sessions prior to the wedding and (when possible) one session after the wedding is needed to complete the counseling. Should more time be necessary to explore at greater depth any areas of special need, the couple must be willing to invest the time necessary to insure a solid foundation for marriage.

Assignments:

- (1) The couple must take the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis. I will administer and evaluate this test at no charge to the couple.
- (2) The couple must purchase, read and conscientiously complete assignments in: William J. McRae, *Preparing for Your Marriage* (Zondervan, 1980).
- (3) Other assignments will be made as needed in keeping with time constraints.

Miscellaneous:

- (1) There is no charge for pre-marital counseling (other than the purchase of McRae's book). However, since I am willing to invest my time in your future, I do expect the commitment of the couple to spend the time and effort needed to make a responsible commitment of marriage before God.
- (2) There is room for flexibility in the wedding ceremony as long as the ceremony used is in good taste and within my abilities (ex. I will not sing your vows nor will I perform your wedding while parachuting out of an airplane!).

Agreement

Having prayerfully read the above, we commit ourselves to willingly comply with these stipulations. We desire our marriage to glorify God and therefore we are willing to prepare ourselves to that end.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____