

Premarital Counseling

NAME:



Church / Community / Personal Philosophy for Premarital Counseling

► Insert statements here

Rationale or Justification for Premarital Counseling

- ▶ Insert rationale with statistics, etc. here.

What is coming in the next 9 weeks?

Session 1- The realities of marriage.

Session 2- Who are you as a couple?

Session 3- Who are you as individuals?

Session 4- What are your expectations?

Session 5- Dealing with disagreements.

Session 6- Sexual Realities

Session 7- Family Realities

Session 8- Where do we go from here?

Session 1: The Realities of Marriage

Week 1: The realities of marriage.

- ▶ Currently, in the United States, we are seeing a 50-year low in the annual divorce rates! The current rate is 14.9% down from 22.6% in the 1980s.
- ▶ While this is great news for America, in Portsmouth, our annual divorce rate is 15.4% This is higher than the rate in our county, our state and the national average!
- ▶ What can we do?

Week 1: The realities of marriage.

- ▶ What we can do, is prepare couples by handling problems before they happen.
- ▶ Studies show that premarital counseling decreases the chance of divorce by 31%!
- ▶ This program will stretch your understanding of your relationship and what God expects for your marriage in an interactive and enjoyable way.

Week 1: The realities of marriage.

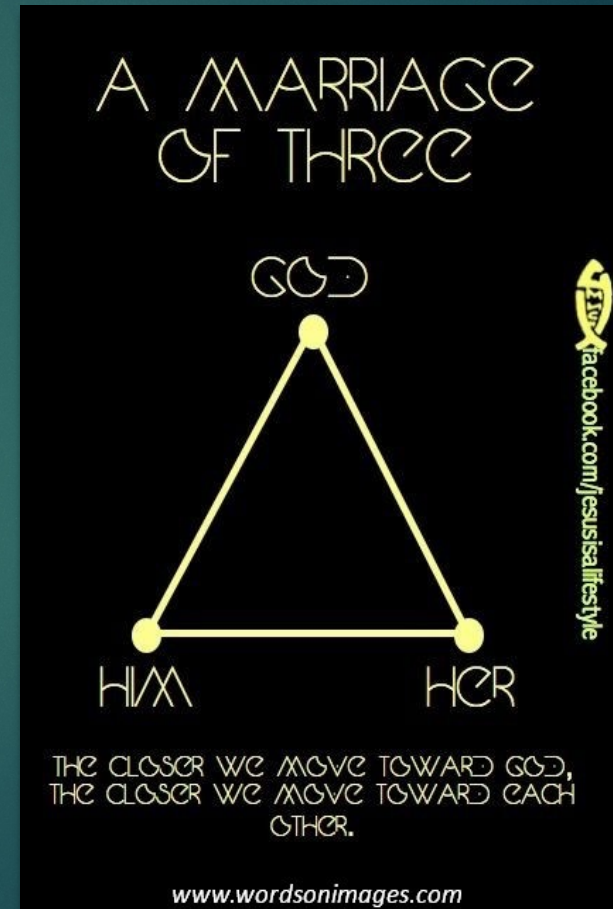
- ▶ Our Mission Statement: The goal of our Church and this ministry is to prepare you for a godly marriage that can withstand every potential pitfall and last a lifetime.

Week 1: The realities of marriage

- ▶ This begs the question, “What is a godly marriage?”
- ▶ Let us look at Matthew 19: 4-6 “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let no man separate.” (Matt. 19:4-6: ESV)

Week 1: The realities of marriage.

- ▶ In this text we see 3 major keys of a godly marriage:
 - a) God is who makes the marriage a marriage.
 - b) The couple leaves their families and creates a new one.
 - c) The two individuals become one by God.



Week 1: The realities of marriage.

► What do you need to bring so these sessions are effective?

a) Honesty- You cannot lie and expect results.

b) Positive Attitudes- We are going to unearth the good and the bad, so you need to be positive about working together.

Week 1: The realities of marriage.

c) Love- The same love that brought you to this point will serve you well for every session.

- ▶ I Corinthians 13:4-7- “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (I Cor. 13:4-7: ESV)

Week 1: The realities of marriage.

- ▶ Homework: For next week I want you to do the Prepare/Enrich Assessment. You each will receive an email with the instructions and links.
- ▶ Remember: Take the assessments individually and BE HONEST!
 - Answer with how things are and not how want them to be.

Session 2: Who are you as individuals?

Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

- ▶ This session is going to look at who you are as a individuals.
- ▶ If you remember back to Matthew, Jesus talked about a husband and a wife.
- ▶ God is putting together two sinful individual humans and making one.

Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

- ▶ We will start this week with a common lie that people tell themselves when it comes to marriage: I can change my mate after marriage.
- ▶ A study by the University of Alberta found that key personality traits never change throughout several relationships.
- ▶ While people may change in small ways, who they really are will remain.
- ▶ Have you ever tried to change a partner?

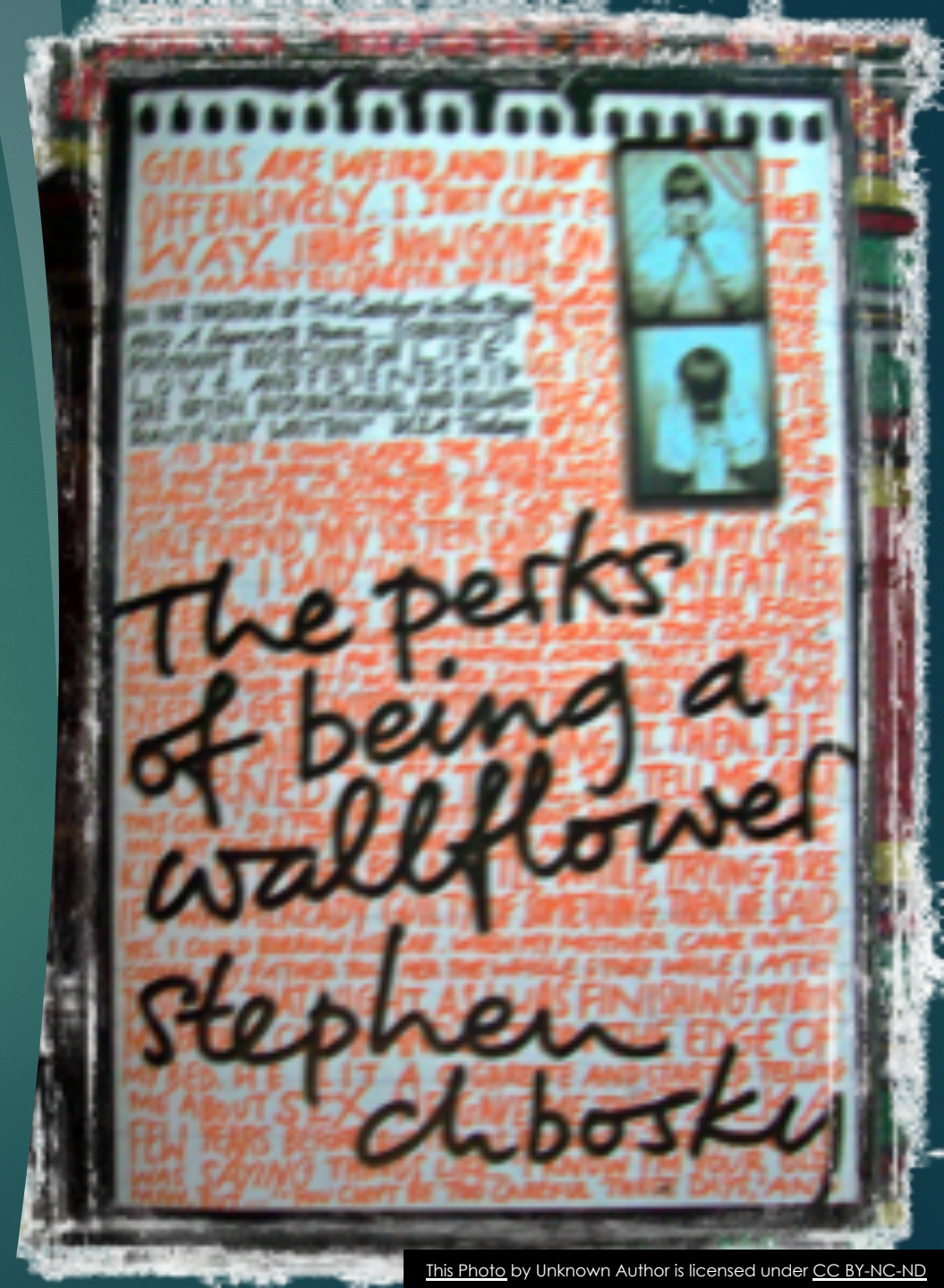
Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

- ▶ As part of the assessment that you took, you took the SCOPE personality test.
- ▶ As you read your report, are there any surprises?
- ▶ Remember that we are here to focus on the positives of these personality traits.
- ▶ At the end of this section, you will see how you are similar and how you are different.
- ▶ This section desires to foster understanding and how you can work together where you differ.

Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

Social

- ▶ Who is the social butterfly and who is the wallflower?
- ▶ Remember that there are positives to both sides of a trait.
- ▶ Has this led to any problems while dating?
- ▶ What are some ways that you guys can work together?



Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

Change

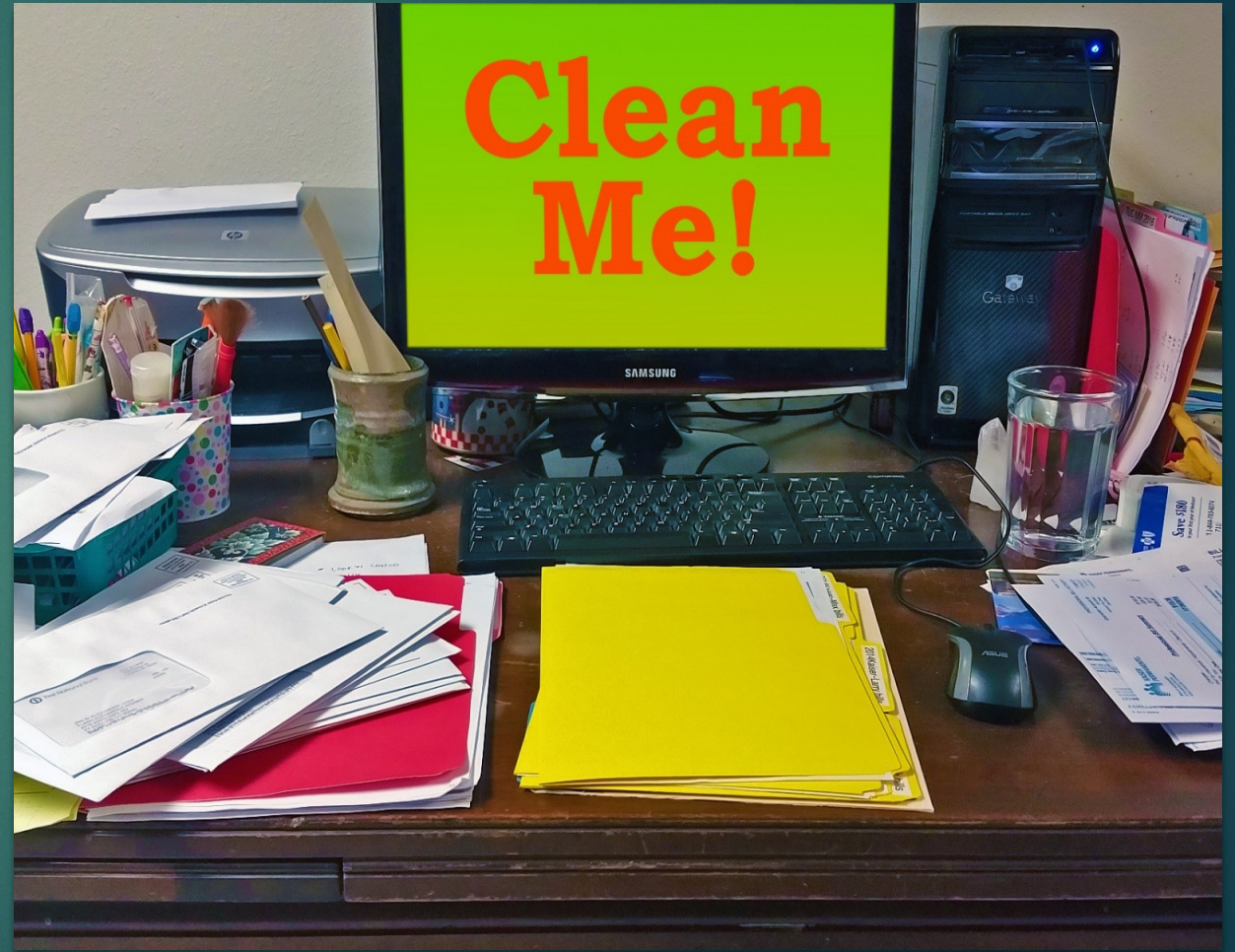
- ▶ This discusses who goes with the flow and who is heaving over the side when change comes.
- ▶ Another aspect of this would be looking at new adventures.
- ▶ Which of you jumps at a new opportunity and who is feeling anxious at the mention of new experiences.
- ▶ How close to home does this hit?
- ▶ How can you work together to work within this context?



Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

Organized

- ▶ This is the one that often has no middle ground...either you are, or you are not.
- ▶ This trait is seen in small things like sorting mail and things as large as becoming CEO of a large company!
- ▶ Because this can be a pervasive trait, have you seen any potential friction areas?



Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

Pleasing

- ▶ Do you play well with others?
- ▶ This does not only affect how you work at work but also how you will get along together!
- ▶ Do you compete against each other, or do you work together?



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Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

Emotionally Steady

- ▶ This is gauging your reaction to stress.
- ▶ Are you cool, calm and collected or do you tend toward
- ▶ This has a wide array of areas that it can affect. You will see this anywhere stress arises.
- ▶ Do you agree with how the assessment rated your partner?



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Week 2: Who are you as individuals?

- ▶ Your homework for this week will be to take notice of each others' similarities and differences.
- ▶ I want to see how you guys are enjoying your similarities and working with your differences.
- ▶ Next week have some concrete ways that you have worked together with your differences.

Session 3: Who are you as a couple?

Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

- ▶ Last week we focused on you both as individuals, but this week will focus on who you are as a couple.
- ▶ We will look at the 4 types of pre-marital couples that the Prepare/Enrich program highlights.
- ▶ We will go over the areas of agreement and disagreement that exist between the two of you.
- ▶ We will then discuss and give you some homework for the coming week.

Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

The 4 Types of Relationships

1. Vitalized- This is the couple with the most couple satisfaction.
2. Harmonious- This couple has moderate satisfaction as a couple.
3. Conventional- This couple is what you will most often see.
4. Conflicted- This couple has the least satisfaction.

Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

Core Scales

- ▶ There are 9 core areas that you were tested on.
- ▶ Prepare/Enrich allows us to see where you are on the same page on these critical areas.
- ▶ This is by no means exhaustive, but it gives a great starting point.
- ▶ After we talk through the 9 areas, we will talk about them.

Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

Core Scales

1. Communication- How well do you talk to one another.
2. Conflict Resolution- Do you disagree well?
3. Partner Style/Habits- Do your personalities mesh or clash?
4. Financial Management- Do you agree with how to spend money?
5. Leisure Activities- Do you like to do the same things?

Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

Core Scales

6. Sexual Expectations- Have you had this conversation yet?
7. Family and Friends- Are you able to exist in each others' circles?
8. Relationship Roles- Who expects who to do what?
9. Spiritual Beliefs- Are your faith practices and beliefs complement one another?

Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

Thoughts

- ▶ As you look at your scores, do you agree or disagree? Why?
- ▶ As you see the list, are you beginning to home in on the growth areas?
- ▶ Avoid tunnel vision.
- ▶ Celebrate your strong areas and plan for growing.



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Week 3: Who are you as a couple?

Homework

- ▶ Plan something to strengthen your areas of agreement.
- ▶ Plan something to help work on conflict areas.
- ▶ Do one of each this week.

Session 4: What are your expectations?

Week 4: What are your expectations?

- ▶ What are you expecting of your spouse and more importantly, have you told them?
- ▶ While this may seem like a small issue, it is rather large in reality.
- ▶ Resentments in marriage usually have their roots in unmet expectations.
- ▶ This week we will look at some common expectations.

Week 4: What are your expectations?

Common Expectations

1. Having and Raising Children
 - Are you having kids?
 - How many?
 - Will they be raised in an authoritarian home or one with a looser structure?
 - How will they be disciplined?

Week 4: What are your expectations?

Common Expectations

2. Chores

- What do you have in mind for the division of labor?
- Traditional gender roles or not?
- Will this remain even after children?

Week 4: What are your expectations?

Common Expectations

3. Conflict

- Do you fight or flight?
- Do you like to handle it right then or do you want to get away?
- What do you expect the other person to be ok with?

Week 4: What are your expectations?

- ▶ It doesn't take many examples to see how much you have yet to talk about.
- ▶ Is there a cure for unmet expectations? YES!
- ▶ The cure, is communication. Talk about what you expect and let each other know what you expect.
- ▶ When someone fails to meet an expectation, remember to show grace and love.

Week 4: What are your expectations?

- ▶ For this week, focus on expectations.
- ▶ Is there something that you are expecting or wanting but have not told the other person?
- ▶ Set a time to talk about these things. You may not have it all figured out but keeping working and being gracious to one another.

Session 5: Dealing with disagreements.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements.

- ▶ This is one of those issues that can hamper any relationship no matter the age or the stage.
- ▶ It is also something that EVERY couple does! Every couple argues at some point.
- ▶ What I want you two to learn is that there is a right way and a wrong way to argue.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

- ▶ There is a healthy way to argue and an unhealthy way to argue.
- ▶ This week we will identify what makes arguments healthy or unhealthy.
- ▶ We will wrap up with a look at Prepare/Enrich's Ten Steps for Resolving Conflict.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

Unhealthy Conflict

- ▶ Stops trying to fix the issue.
- ▶ Is more concerned with being right.
- ▶ Calm discussion is overcome with anger and wrath.
- ▶ "...yelling, throwing things, and other intense manifestations of anger are harder to recover from."

- Angela Lashbrook



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Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

Healthy Conflict

- ▶ Solution Oriented
- ▶ Not concerned with who is right or wrong
- ▶ Both partners are calm and work together to find the fix.



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Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

Prepare/Enrich 10 Steps for Conflict Resolution

1. Set a time and place for discussion.
 - Anytime where you can dedicate time.
 - Anyplace where you both feel comfortable.
2. Define the problem.
 - Be very clear in defining the problem.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

3. List the ways that you each contribute to the problem.
 - Both partners must list their SPECIFIC contributions.
 - Neither party is blameless.
4. List past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful.
 - Be thorough to ensure you don't waste time trying something for the second time.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

5. Brainstorm 10 possible solutions to the problem.
 - Doesn't matter how weird some might seem.
6. Discuss and evaluate each of these possible solutions.
 - When evaluating, be objective.
 - The goal is to see which ones could ACTUALLY work.
7. Agree on one solution to try.
 - You can only put your efforts into one solution.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

8. Agree *how* you will each work toward this solution.
 - Be SPECIFIC.
 - Both parties *MUST* work toward the solution for it to work.
9. Set another meeting to discuss your progress.
 - Same rules as before but give time to try the solution.
10. Reward each other for progress.
 - Acknowledge your partner's hard work.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

► Abuse

- Physical, verbal, and sexual abuse is NEVER acceptable...EVER!
- Abuse CANNOT be justified no matter the provocation.
- If you are being abused you need to report it. Abuse is NEVER OK.

Week 5: Dealing with disagreements

Homework

- ▶ Take the week to try working on another disagreement using the 10 Step process.
- ▶ See what is working and not working and come back next week with the results.

Session 6: Sexual Realities

Week 6: Sexual Realities

- ▶ This is the session that always makes everyone uncomfortable.
- ▶ Christianity makes talking about sex taboo.
- ▶ We spend so much time trying not to talk about it that it can make needing to talk about it awkward.



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Week 6: Sexual Realities

- ▶ There is a reason there is something called the “Wedding Night Jitters.”
- ▶ Feeling nervous and anxious is perfectly acceptable.
- ▶ This section will work at easing the anxiety and fostering discussion.

Week 6: Sexual Realities

What does the Bible say?

- ▶ Sex inside of marriage is a good thing!
 - Genesis 2:25, Proverbs 5:18-19, Hebrews 13:4
- ▶ If you are married, you should be having it often.
 - I Corinthians 7:5
- ▶ It is both for children and for enjoyment.
 - Genesis 2:24

Week 6: Sexual Realities

Steps to easing the anxiety.

- ▶ Do your own research.
 - I do not mean pornography. It is a lie and will hurt your marriage.
 - There are lots of good books about sex and marriage.
 - Talk to Christians that you trust.

Week 6: Sexual Realities

► Communicate

- Talk to each other about it!
- Share your insecurities and fears with each other.
- Share your expectations, so that you can work out realistic expectations.
- Communication has come up a lot in our sessions because you cannot communicate enough.

Week 6: Sexual Realities

- ▶ Your first sexual experience together is the start of an amazing lifelong conversation.
- ▶ Sex is the most intimate conversation and that is what really matters.
- ▶ Sharing the love that you HAVE for each other WITH each other is the beautiful part.

Week 6: Sexual Realities

- ▶ As you embark on this adventure of sex within marriage, you will continue to learn about each other and grow.
- ▶ Your first time does not set the tone for the rest of your sex life. Have fun and enjoy one another.

Week 6: Sexual Realities

Homework

- ▶ If you haven't yet, talk to each other.
- ▶ Share your fears, concerns, expectations with each other and validate one another.

Session 7: Family Realities

Week 7: Family Realities



- ▶ In our next to last session, we will take a look at your individual families.
- ▶ The truth is that you are not marrying just each other, but you are marrying your families as well.

Week 7: Family Realities

- ▶ This week we will look at some of your family realities that you may not have discussed yet.
- ▶ Have your families met yet? Have you met each others' families?
- ▶ These may seem like silly questions, but you would be surprised.
- ▶ Some of the issues that we will discuss may not apply to you and we will not dwell on them.

Week 7: Family Realities

Problematic Family Members

- ▶ If you have members that are argumentative now, they will not change after you are married.
- ▶ Do you have a sibling that will try to find something wrong all the time?
- ▶ Are there family members that will continue to demand your attention after marriage?
- ▶ Do you have family members that might hinder promotions or cause your job to take a more in-depth look at you?

Week 7: Family Realities

Sick or ill Family Members

- ▶ Family with illnesses
 - Is there a chance that you will end up taking care of a special needs sibling?
- ▶ Family with addiction
 - Do you have family struggling with addiction?
 - Are these members allowed around?
 - Are they potentially dangerous?

Week 7: Family Realities

Mother-in-Law(Zilla)

- ▶ Does your Mother-in-Law have plans for your marriage?
- ▶ Is she a part of the planning? Does she want to be?
- ▶ Is she on board with everything that is being planned?
- ▶ She does not need to be involved or on board but you both need to discuss this issue and be prepared for what might happen after the fact.

Week 7: Family Realities

Father-in-Law(With a grip)

- ▶ Is her father still intending to be her go to for problems?
- ▶ Is she still holding on to her father and not intending to cleave to you?
- ▶ This can breed resentment between husband and wife.

Week 7: Family Realities

Family Expectations

- ▶ You are not the only ones with expectations.
- ▶ Where are you spending your holidays?
- ▶ Who is paying for the wedding? Traditional or something else?
- ▶ Who are you visiting first?
- ▶ Is either family expecting/demanding loyalty beyond normal?

Week 7: Family Realities

Communication, Time and Grace

- ▶ Communication is the key to handling in-laws and their issues/expectations.
- ▶ Time will also be needed to cut “apron strings” if you will.
- ▶ Grace will be needed from start to finish because you both and your in-laws will fail at times and grace is a must.

Week 7: Family Realities

Homework

- ▶ Set down and talk about family this week.
- ▶ Make mention and be thorough when you discuss potential issues.
- ▶ Surprises in the first couple months and years of marriage can be difficult to overcome.
- ▶ Family secrets can be a big problem if not discussed beforehand.
- ▶ Show grace to one another and to your families throughout this process.

Session 8: Where do we go from here?

Week 8: Where do we go from here?

- ▶ Congratulations! You have made it to your final week!
- ▶ I appreciate your hard work throughout this process.
- ▶ It hasn't been easy or fun at times, but the work that you have put in now has built a strong foundation for the rest of your marriage.



Week 8: Where do we go from here?

- ▶ This week will look at some things to remember in the coming days, months, and years.
- ▶ Remember that you are not alone. The Church and I are here for you no matter the need and no matter the time.
- ▶ Remember that God, who will make you into one flesh, will never leave you nor forsake you.



Week 8: Where do we go from here?

- ▶ Remember that even though you are finished with premarital counseling, you need to continue working on the things we have discussed.
- ▶ Remember that no matter how fast life gets, and hard things might become, keep COMMUNICATING!
- ▶ You two will become one flesh and if you stop communicating you will leave room for anyone else to start talking in your place.

Week 8: Where do we go from here?

- ▶ Take my contact information just in case you hit any snags or need any advice in the coming days.
- ▶ If you have not joined considered joining the Church's young married group, please consider joining.
- ▶ It is a good place to meet with other young married couples who you can bounce ideas off of and make connections with.
- ▶ May the Lord bless and keep you and your marriage from your first day to your last day!

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[es.](https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-us-divorce-rate-has-hit-a-50-year-low#:~:text=low%20in%202019,-,For%20every%201%2C000%20marriages%20in%20the%20last%20year%2C%20only%2014.9,in%20divorce%20per%201%2C000%20marriages)