



# Counseling Center

OF GRACE FELLOWSHIP

Helping each other please God

## Pre-Engagement Counseling Schedule Counselor Copy

CLH: Christian Living in the Home, Dr. Jay Adams  
MGW: Preparing for Marriage God's Way, Dr. Wayne Mack  
Pre-engagement sermon set, Brad Bigney  
Intended for Pleasure, Dr. Ed Wheat

1. A couple interested in marriage will contact Linda Sprague in the church office (371-7880 or [lindasprague@graceky.org](mailto:lindasprague@graceky.org) ). They are asked if either have been previously married so that the proper intake forms are prepared for them. They are asked to attend a Grace Fellowship Sunday service and join a Grace small group while they are in counseling.
2. **Important Note:** We ask that you NOT have a date for the wedding ceremony already set before we begin the counseling process. If you do already have a date set, we ask that you stop working towards that date and delay setting a date until at least 3 or 4 of your counseling sessions have been completed successfully. Our desire is that this counseling process will help you determine whether or not you should get married to this person at this time. To already be working on wedding plans at the same time as you work through the counseling is premature and distracting. We do not want anyone to feel the pressure to go through with the wedding just because plans have already been made, money spent, invitations sent out, etc. in spite of issues that have been discovered in counseling that need to be addressed prior to marriage. Not setting a date can avoid embarrassment if through the counseling process you determine that you want to delay getting married, or if it becomes clear that you should not marry this person.
3. The couple will receive the counseling intake forms and pre-engagement counseling brochure. Upon completion of the intake forms, they are returned to the office. The Counseling Team determines the counselor best suited and available to meet with the couple. The counselor will contact the couple to set up the first session. The first session will be to discuss the booklet by David Powlison "**Pre-Engagement: 5 Questions to Ask Yourself**". The booklet is available in the church office or the Resource Center. Read the booklet, underline the 10 most important points and discuss them together as a couple and come ready to talk about these with the counselor.
4. After the first session, the counselor determines whether the couple will proceed with pre-engagement counseling; the counselee couple should contact the church office to purchase the necessary materials for the counseling. Approximate cost of the materials is \$100.
5. After the counseling sessions with the counselor have been completed, the couple should make an appointment with the pastor to summarize where they are in their intent to proceed with marriage and to begin to discuss the wedding ceremony.

**Session #1****TOPIC**

*"Pre-Engagement: 5 Questions to Ask Yourself"*

**HOMEWORK**

Discuss the 10 most important points and any questions that may need to be addressed.

**Your Focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: "Did you do the homework?" "How did the homework go?"
3. Let's talk about the booklet – "Tell me the first thing you underlined and why

**Session #2**

Bible Basics  
About Marriage

**HOMEWORK**

1. Read & identify the three most important concepts in Chapters 1&2 of CLH and write them on a sheet of paper
2. MGW Ch. 1-2 – answer questions & then discuss it together before meeting with your counselor.
3. Listen to "What Happened to My Dream?" from *Avoiding the Deadly Sins*

**Your Focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: "Did you do the homework?" "How did the homework go?"
3. Let's talk about the CLH Ch. 1-2 – "Tell me the first thing you underlined in ch. 1-2 and why"
4. Ask them: "Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?" "Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?"  
Definitely talk about p. 2, (#6,7,8) and p. 3, #10 in Mack workbook: "Are you having sex?"  
Discuss p. 4, #3,4 in Mack workbook: "What are the strengths / weaknesses of your relationship?"  
Discuss p. 5, #1-4 in Mack workbook: definition, goals, and expectations of marriage  
Discuss p. 16, #22 in Mack workbook: "What is your greatest fear?"
5. Talk about marriage not being given by God to meet all your needs
6. Talk about expecting problems in your marriage because two sinners are coming together under one roof – the goal should be to learn how to work through problems quickly, in a godly way.

**Session #3**Priorities and  
Marriage**HOMEWORK**

1. MGW Ch. 3-5 – answer questions & then discuss it together before meeting with your counselor
2. Write out your own letter (MGW pg. 33)
3. Listen to “Can’t You Fix Our Marriage Fast?” from *Avoiding the Deadly Sins*
4. Read CLH Ch. 4 and underline the 10 most important sentences to you.

**Your focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: “Did you do the homework?” “How did the homework go?”
3. Let’s talk about the CLH Ch. 4 – “Tell me the first thing you underlined in ch. 4 and why”
4. Talk about the importance of **Genesis 2:24**: Leave, Cleave, Weave – see p. 51-55 CLH
5. Discuss some of the problems that occur when either spouse does not fully “leave” his father and mother and cling to their spouse.
6. Ask them: “Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?” “Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?”  
Discuss p. 31, #1-3 about in-laws
7. Discuss the sermon outline for “Can’t You Fix Our Marriage Fast?”
8. Talk about the biblical definition of love – Giving for the needs of another expecting nothing in return (use John 3:16, Gal. 2:20, Eph. 5:25)
9. Talk about love being based on a commitment to give to another, rather than being based on feelings. Feelings come and feelings go. You don’t want to ride the roller coaster of feelings in your marriage.
10. Talk about how love can grow and can be learned (see Titus 2:4)
11. Talk about Matt. 6:21 – where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Make investments into your spouse – time, energy, thoughts, loving deeds, money, etc. – and your heart will follow!

**Session #4**

Biblical  
Communication  
(4-Rules)

**HOMEWORK**

1. MGW Ch. 6-7 – answer questions & then get together and discuss it before meeting with your counselor
2. Listen to “Speaking to the Heart of Your Mate” Part 1 & 2 from *Built to Last*
3. Read CLH Ch. 3 and underline the 10 most important sentences to you.

**Your focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: “Did you do the homework?” “How did the homework go?”
3. Let’s talk about the CLH Ch. 3 – “Tell me the first thing you underlined in ch. 3 and why”
4. Use the diagrams on p. 34 of CLH to talk about how to attack the problem and not the person. Use Matt. 7:1-5 (Log and speck) to teach the biblical principle of considering your own sin, or your own contribution to the problem first.
5. Ask them: “Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?” “Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?”  
Consider asking them to talk to you about p. 61, F in the Mack workbook  
Discuss p. 70 in the Mack workbook  
Discuss p. 73 in the Mack workbook
6. Teach the 4 rules of godly communication from Eph. 4:25-32 (also v. 15) – (See the separate handout giving the details and verses for the 4 rules of godly communication: Be Honest, Stay Current, Attack the Problem Not the Person, and Act Don’t React.
7. Talk about balancing “Speak the truth” (Eph. 4:15) with “Love covers a multitude of sins” (Prov. 10:12 & I Peter 4:8). Speaking the truth doesn’t mean saying everything you think. “A fool vents all his feelings...” (Prov. 29:11). Choose your battles wisely. Is this issue something that is reoccurring and a pattern that really hinders your relationship? Should you forbear? “Love bears all things” (I Cor. 13:7)
8. Talk about the danger of not staying current with each other. Keep short accounts so that Satan cannot get a ‘foothold’ in your marriage or drive a wedge between you.
9. Discuss the danger of bitterness setting in when you don’t stay current with one another and you allow things to build up. “Looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” (Heb. 12:15). Show from I Cor. 13:5 “love keeps no record of wrong” (NIV) “love does not take into account a wrong suffered” (NASB)

**Session #5**

Biblical Role of the  
Husband

**HOMEWORK**

1. Read CLH Ch. 7 and underline the 10 most important sentences to you
2. MGW Ch. 9 – answer questions & then get together to discuss it before meeting with your counselor
3. Listen to “How to Really Love Your Wife” from *Built to Last* series and complete homework.

**Your focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: “Did you do the homework?” “How did the homework go?”
3. Let’s talk about the CLH Ch. 7 – “Tell me the first thing you underlined in Ch. 7 and why”
4. Ask them: “Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?”  
“Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?”
5. Discuss the biblical role of the husband: Lover (Love her!), Leader (Lead her!), and Learner (Learn her!)  
Lover – Eph. 5:25 – sacrificially as Christ loves the church (review again what biblical love is!)  
Leader – Eph. 5:23 – servant leadership – like Christ leads us – not demanding or selfish  
Learner – I Peter 3:7 – KJV “live with her according to knowledge”

**Session #6**

Biblical Role of the  
Wife

**HOMEWORK**

1. Wife-I Peter 3:1-6 outline these verses
2. CLH Ch. 6
3. MGW Ch. 10 – answer questions & then get together and discuss it before meeting with your counselor
4. Listen to “How to Really Love Your Husband” from *Built to Last* series and complete homework.

**Your focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: “Did you do the homework?” “How did the homework go?”
3. Let’s talk about the CLH Ch. 6 – “Tell me the first thing you underlined in Ch. 6 and why”
4. Especially discuss biblical submission = freedom not bondage – see p. 74ff CLH – use separate handout I gave describing what biblical submission is and is NOT.

5. Read I Peter 3:1-6 and discuss how even when the husband is NOT doing what he is supposed to do she is to “win him over without a word”. That does not mean she never speaks (Eph. 4:15 tells her to speak the truth in love), but the war is not going to be primarily won with words. She needs to keep living godly in front of that husband. She also needs to follow Romans 12:12-21 that tells her not to repay evil with evil and to “overcome evil with good.”
6. Discuss the woman working outside the home – see p. 81-82 CLH – Can she do it and still make her husband and home the priority? That must be her first calling.
7. The wife must obey her husband unless he commands her to do something that is clearly forbidden in the Bible, or forbids her to do something that is clearly commanded in the Bible. Then she must follow Acts 5:29 “We must obey God rather than men.”
8. Ask them: “Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?”  
“Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?”

### **Session #7**

Financial  
Stewardship  
and Conflict

### **HOMEWORK**

1. MGW Ch. 8, 11 - answer questions & then get together and discuss it before meeting with your counselor
2. Complete budget sheet
3. Listen to “Why Is There So Much Conflict Between Us?” from *Avoiding the Deadly Sins* series.

### **Your focus for the session:**

1. Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
2. Ask them: “Did you do the homework?” “How did the homework go?”
3. Discuss the sermon outline “Why Is There So Much Conflict Between Us?”
4. Teach about your thinking (Stimuli – Thinking – Emotions – Actions – t.e.a. – Character) and how until your thinking changes your actions and feelings are going to continue in the same direction. To resolve conflicts you need to get at the heart issues. What are you wanting? What are you saying to yourself? (use the separate worksheet on “Issue of Life” chart “How Do We Process Life?”)

5. Teach about biblical forgiveness. It is not a feeling. It is a CHOICE to let the matter go... to no longer hold them responsible... to no longer seek to punish them. Forgiveness means 3 things:
- I will not bring this up to you again.
  - I will not talk about it to others
  - I will not dwell on it myself – Here again you can talk about the battle to ‘take thoughts captive’ and to replace ‘stinking thinking’ with biblical thinking – to choose to think loving thoughts towards your mate.

Tell them how to ask for forgiveness from one another rather than just saying “I’m sorry.” Tell them to say: “I was wrong. I sinned against you when I (name the specific incident using a biblical term if possible i.e. ‘when I was selfish’ or ‘when I lashed out at you in anger’ or ‘when I withdrew and pouted’). Will you please forgive me?”

**Forgiveness Verses:**

Matt. 18:21-35 – parable of the unforgiving servant

Matt. 18:21-22 – How often must I forgive? 70x7

Luke 17:3 – How many times in a day should I forgive the same person?

Eph. 4:32 “forgiving one another just as God in Christ forgave you”

Col. 3:13 “bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”

2 Cor. 2:11-12 “Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive... lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

6. Ask them: “Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?” “Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?”  
Ask them: “Do you have a budget?” “Do either of you have debt?” “Do you have any idea of what your joint living expenses will be once you’re married?”

**Session #8**

Biblical Principles  
of Sex

**HOMEWORK**

- MGW Ch. 12
- Listen to “Sex: Great Gift or Great Grief” from *Built to Last* series.

**Your focus in the session:**

- Greet them and then open in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be your teacher for your time together, and thanking God for giving us a blueprint for a godly marriage in His Word.
- Ask them: “Did you do the Mack workbook and then meet together and discuss it?” “Was there any spot that prompted lots of discussion or any disagreement?”  
Discuss p. 115, #3 in Mack workbook  
Discuss birth control p. 119, #12 – have they discussed this with each other? Have they decided what they are going to do?  
Discuss children p. 119, #13

Discuss p. 116 in Mack workbook – Did anything stand out there to you?

3. Ask them to begin reading Ed Wheat’s book, “Intended for Pleasure” – one of them should read it and mark it, then give to the other and let them read it and mark with a different color. Then they should get together to discuss it. Do NOT do this too soon before the wedding. This should take place 6-8 weeks before the wedding.

**Session #9**

(post-marital)

Review

6 wks after wedding

**HOMEWORK**

MGW Ch. 14

You mark on your calendar to call the couple to set up an appt. for 6 weeks after the wedding. Ask them to complete the MGW Ch. 14 and then meet and discuss it.

**Session #10**

(6 month  
check-up)

Rearing children

God’s Way

**HOMEWORK**

1. MGW Ch. 15

2. Read CLH Ch. 8

You mark on your calendar to call the couple to set up an appt. for 6 mos. after the wedding. Ask them to complete the MGW Ch. 15 and read CLH Ch. 8, then meet and discuss it. If they are considering having children in the near future you might suggest they purchase the sermon series Brad did, “Raising Solid Kids in a Broken World.”

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES TO PURCHASE FOR YOUR MARRIAGE**

**1. Software for your computer:**

Quicken Delux, Intuit; P.O. Box 3014; Menlo, CA 94026; (415)322-0573

MicroSoft Money, see a software distributor

Quick Verse, for personal & family Bible study by Parsons Technology

**2. Books to read and discuss:**

Intended for Pleasure, Dr. Ed Wheat and Gaye Wheat, Fleming H. Revell, Grand Rapids, MI

Strengthening Your Marriage, Wayne A. Mack, P & P Publishing, Phillipsburg, New Jersey

Shepherding A Child’s Heart, Tedd Tripp, Shepherd Press, Wapwallopen, PA

A Godward Life, John Piper, Mutnomah Pub.

The Excellent Wife, Martha Peace, Focus Publishing Inc., Bemidji, Minnesota

Disciplines of a Godly Man, R. Kent Hughes, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Ill.

The Complete Husband, Lou Priolo, Calvary Press