

PreEngaged.com

Pre-engagement Counseling

Thank you for inquiring to learn more about our pre-engagement counseling service.

My wife and I have earned Master's degrees in Marriage and Family Therapy and have serviced over 500 face-to-face client hours. We have found that the *best* time to get relationship counseling is *before* the decision to become married has been made. Once that decision has been made, and announced to family and friends, a mental permanence that this other person *is* going to be my future spouse is birthed and is difficult to change - even when signs point in that direction. Instead, we have found it is better for the couple to go through the pre-engagement counseling process with a person whom they are serious about marrying, but to whom they are not yet engaged.

We have developed a comprehensive, well-tested, 16-week Biblically based curriculum for those who are dating and/or looking to get married. This curriculum will help you to get to know your significant other and yourself better.

After becoming engaged, all of the couples who continued onto the 8-week premarital track have found it worthwhile and beneficial. Below are both tracks so that you can review them.

Topics covered in the 8 week pre-engagement track:

- In-depth Personality Analysis (Personal and Couple)
- Expectations
- Communication Styles
- Resolving Conflict
- Handling Finances
- Working Together
- Religion and Religious Practice
- Families of Origin
- Life Goals
- ... and more!

Topics covered in the 8 week premarital track:

- Further Personality Analysis (Personal and Couple)
- Discussing Wedding Planning
- Physical Intimacy and the Wedding Night
- Community
- Living Routines
- Celebrations and Holidays
- The Sacredness of Marriage
- Parenting
- Client-specific Issues
- ... and more!

On the following pages are some questions you may have about the pre-engagement counseling process. If you have any questions that are not addressed, please e-mail us at answers@preengaged.com!

*** Do you use Biblical principles?**

Our curriculum is based on Biblical principles. We believe that the institution of marriage was created by God to glorify God. Since He created it, we believe that no one knows how to make marriages successful better than Him. He shows us how to have successful marriages in his Word. We assist by making God's principles for marriage applicable for your relationship.

*** Have your other clients been successful in their relationships?**

We have enjoyed watching many of our couples grow in just a short time. We've worked with clients dealing with issues of communication, trust, financial insecurity, anger and intense relational doubt and have seen them grow tremendously in the short time we worked with them. Several are currently enjoying successful marriages, others are in the process of planning their weddings, and others have a more healthy dating relationship. We love to hear from our former clients!

*** What have your other clients said about your services?**

Please see our Testimonial Page for former client testimonials.

<http://preengaged.com/counseling-services/pre-engagement-counseling-testimonials>

*** Time commitment / How much out of session time will this require?**

You will never leave the session wondering how to implement what you have learned. Each week we give specific, useful assignments to our couples to help them put the principles they have learned into practice. Some clients have spent half an hour each on these assignments while others have spent several hours. The more effort you put into completing the assignments the more you will gain from them. Usually the assignments are not extremely time consuming and often fit easily into daily life/routine. We do not assign busy work; we will only give practical assignments that will benefit you now and in the future. We recommend keeping your assignments in a three-ring binder so you can refer back to them at a later time.

*** Can the curriculum be personalized?**

We have specific topics that we are sure to cover based on the counseling selected; however, as we work through the curriculum, client concerns often come up and we want to thoroughly address each area of need. No two couples are exactly alike and our goal is to help each couple know themselves and each other better. This usually requires that we spend more time on certain topics than others.

Sometimes we find that an issue either tangents too far from the material we are discussing or the time needed to completely explore the topic is greater than the time allotted. In those cases, we are open to scheduling additional sessions at a rate of \$75 per 100-minute session. The couple can either request the additional session(s) or we may suggest that the additional sessions be scheduled due to our experience in counseling with pre-engaged couples.

*** Why should we get counseling before we are engaged? We plan to seek premarital counseling once we are engaged.**

We strongly recommend going through the counseling process *before* committing to each other through engagement. We have found that once a couple is engaged there are certain things they are not as comfortable discussing for fear that it may take away from the happiness of the engagement period. The period of engagement can be so much more freeing once the counseling is past and the issues have been discussed and resolved. Our pre-engagement clients have made comments that they were so happy to get to the root of their problems early so they could resolve before entering into a season of engagement. Even our clients who did not feel they have relational issues found things they needed to work on and they were thrilled to enter engagement with the tools to make their relationship a life-long success.

*** Our friends think we're crazy for seeking counseling before engagement. Can you tell us why you consider pre-engagement counseling so important?**

If your friends think you are crazy, it is probably because they have not heard of many (or any) people going through relational counseling before engagement. Some feel that going to counseling is a sign of weakness; however, in the case of pre-engagement counseling, the counseling is preventative. The process of marriage does not begin at the wedding. It begins when a couple decides to become engaged. Once a couple is engaged, they are thrown into a whirlwind of decisions – where to live, when and where to have the wedding, how much to spend on the wedding, etc. At this crazy and blissful time, premarital counseling is often another item on the “to do” list instead of a meaningful process. Beginning the counseling process before engagement can ensure that important things are covered before you become engrossed in wedding planning.

*** I'm ready to get engaged, but my boyfriend/girlfriend is not. Should we seek counsel to work through this disagreement?**

When a person is ready to be married often has to do with age, maturity level, level of personal responsibility, and ability to unconditionally serve one's spouse. If you have been together for more than a year and this is a disagreement you have had for a considerable amount of time, you may want to seek counsel to see if you and your boyfriend/girlfriend can get to the root issue of why he or she is shying away from marriage.

*** We've read every relationship book on the market. How can you tell us things we don't already know?**

Counseling is not simply teaching. We could give you a lot of helpful facts to tuck away, but instead we will engage you in a number of processes that will help put those ideas into practical daily use. Past clients have informed us that the materials we assigned were good, but that the personal counseling was the main process that helped their relationships and, later, marriages.

*** We are young and plan to become engaged in a few years. Is it too early for pre-engagement counseling?**

We recommend pre-engagement counseling once you are seriously considering engagement or if you are having significant difficulties in your relationship you want to work through before considering engagement.

*** We have only been together a few months and we are having struggles. Do you recommend pre-engagement counseling?**

We would recommend giving your relationship at least six months before seeking pre-engagement counseling unless you are planning to marry before a year of dating is completed.

*** We are living together, but we are not engaged yet. Since we are living together and see each other on a daily basis, do we still need pre-engagement counseling?**

Research has shown that couples who cohabit before marriage have an 80% higher divorce rate than those who did not. Pre-engagement counseling will still be beneficial, but know that our advice will be based upon God's Word (which does not endorse cohabitation). We would advise you to stop cohabitating and return to healthy pre-marriage behavior until marriage. If you would like assistance in this, we can help.

*** We have broken up a few times, but we are back together now and really want to make the relationship work. Should we attend pre-engagement counseling, or wait until we are engaged to seek counsel?**

Continuing to break up and get back together is a strong, negative pattern in a relationship. We strongly recommend seeking counsel before marrying to work through the reasons why either, or both, of you are not dealing with and resolving the problems.

*** My boyfriend/girlfriend and I have been struggling for a long time and we are ready to call it quits. Should we consider pre-engagement counseling before making our final decision?**

If you want to give your relationship every possible advantage, we would recommend counseling. Pre-engagement counseling is not designed to help couples find reasons to stay together. It is designed to help couples look at their relationships from different perspectives so they can make an informed decision about whether or not to pursue engagement. It is easier to work through issues when an objective party helps bring the issues to light and provides mediation for working through problems.

*** We're having trouble. Can we address those issues or is this lecture-style counseling?**

These sessions are interactive, not lectures. We will work with you and teach you how to work together in various areas. If you are having trouble in your relationship, we will address those issues within the time allotted or recommend additional sessions. We want you to be successful in life and we will help you work through your relational difficulties.

*** Will you be using any tests or assessments?**

Yes! We use the Psychological Audit of Interpersonal Relationship (PAIR) Test and personality testing measures. Other assessments may be added, if applicable (additional costs may apply).

*** What do we need to bring with us?**

We recommend bringing a 1 inch 3 ring binder filled with paper to keep session notes and assignments organized. We also recommend purchasing tab dividers for your binder (8 tabs, one for each session/week). You should bring this binder, along with your completed assignments, to every session.

*** My boyfriend/girlfriend doesn't want to come. How can I convince him (or her)?**

It is not uncommon to be apprehensive about discussing personal issues with others. While discussing the topic of pre-engagement counseling with your boyfriend/girlfriend, find out *why* he or she is reluctant to engage in this process. If he or she is ultimately unwilling to consider pre-engagement counseling, this may provide insight into his or her willingness to address problems in your relationship and future marriage.

*** Are we too young to get married?**

Studies show that the divorce rate for people marrying at 21 or 22 years of age is 40%-50% higher than for people marrying at 25 years of age and 80% higher than for people marrying at 28 years of age or older. This does not mean that everyone who marries before the age of 25 is doomed, but if you are younger than 25, it is strongly recommended that you and your boyfriend/girlfriend seek counsel, and be open to input, before deciding to marry.

*** How much does the pre-engagement counseling program cost?**

The program is broken up into two eight-week curriculums. The sessions are weekly and are 100 minutes long (we have found that the normal 50-minute counseling hour is too short to get through sufficient material in a week's time). Each eight-week program costs \$495 per couple. All of the clients who have paid for our services have told us they believed the cost was easily worth what they gained through the process - not just for the immediate relational benefits, but for the lifetime application of principles learned. We look forward to helping to build a solid foundation for your future.

*** What do I do now?**

On the following pages, you will find our Pre-Engagement Counseling Intake. If you both are interested in our pre-engagement counseling program, **both people** need to completely fill out a copy of the intake.

Please scan and e-mail back to starting@preengaged.com or mail a copy of the forms to:

Eric Viets / P.O. Box 11423 / Lynchburg, VA 24506

Please also send me an e-mail when the Intake forms have been mailed.

I will get back to you on the same day of their receipt.

Pre-engagement Counseling Intake Date: _____

General Information

Name: _____ Male Female Date of Birth: _____
Address: _____ Phone (home): _____
_____ Phone (cell): _____
E-mail: _____

May we contact you with the above contact information and/or leave a message? Yes No

Name of Home Church: _____

Name of Senior Pastor(s): _____ Are you a member? Yes No

Church Address: _____ Phone (church): _____

Church E-mail: _____

Ethnicity

White/Caucasian Black/African American Native American Asian American

Mexican American / Latino Multiracial/Other: _____

Marital Status

Never Married Divorced: How many times? _____

Separated: For how long? _____ Widowed: (When? _____)

Children (List child's name, sex, and age for each child you have, if any)

Education, Occupation, and Economic Information

Occupation: _____ Company: _____

Current Employment: Full Time Part Time Homemaker Unemployed
 Retired Student (degree level, area of study: _____)

Highest Level of Education: _____ Approx. current household income? _____

How satisfied are you with your job? _____

Do not write below this line

Health / Counseling / Legal Information

1. Are you presently under the care of any medical doctor / practitioner? Yes No
If yes, for what condition: _____

2. Are you currently taking any prescription or non-prescription medications? Yes No
If yes, please indicate type and dosage: _____

3. Are you aware of any physical problems that impair your functioning? Yes No
If yes, please explain: _____

4. Are you currently receiving or have you in the last 3 years received counseling, individual or marital therapy, or been under the care of any mental health provider or addiction recovery provider? Yes No
If yes, for what issue(s): _____

5. Have you ever been hospitalized or been in an outpatient program for emotional issues or substance abuse? Yes No
If yes, please list when, where, and for what issue(s): _____

6. Have you ever been a victim of sexual abuse? Yes No

7. Did either of your primary caregivers (e.g., parents) ever divorce? Yes No

8. Are you currently involved in, or anticipate being involved in any litigation or legal action?
 Yes No
If yes, please explain: _____

Place a check mark beside any descriptions of what you are currently experiencing, if any:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiousness | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear | <input type="checkbox"/> Loneliness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Despair | <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughts of Suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt/Shame | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawing from Others | <input type="checkbox"/> Distance from God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distress | <input type="checkbox"/> Parenting Struggles | <input type="checkbox"/> Relational Stress |

If you checked any above, please explain: _____

Do not write below this line

Goals of Counseling

Please list three goals you want to accomplish during pre-engagement counseling:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Topics of Discussion

Please list three topics you want to make sure to discuss during pre-engagement counseling:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Spiritual Background

Discuss your spiritual background, current spiritual practices, and importance you place on spiritual matters.

Family Background

What is important for us to know about your family (current or history)?

Do not write below this line

Closing Questions

Marital Intention

Have you discussed potential plans to wed in the future with your current boyfriend/girlfriend? Yes No

If yes, have you discussed about when the wedding would take place? Yes No

If yes, about when would the wedding take place? _____

Referenced By

How did you hear about us?

Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (home): _____

Phone (cell): _____

E-mail: _____

Information Sharing

Have you shared, or do you plan to share, the information in this intake with your boyfriend/girlfriend? Yes No

If you would like to privately discuss anything in this intake with one of us (respective same-sex counselor), please indicate the topics here:

Do not write below this line
