Resources for Premarital Counseling

1. Grant, Brian W. *Reclaiming the Dream: Marriage Counseling in the Parish Context*. Abingdon Press. 1986.
2. Smith, Antoninette. *Pastor’s Manual: Growing love in Christian Marriage*. The United Methodist Publishing House. 1981.
3. Stewart, Charles W. *The Minister as Marriage counselor*. Abingdon Press. 1970.
4. Taylor, Charles W. *Premarital Guidance*. Fortress Press. 1999.
5. Wright, Norman. *Marital Counseling: A Biblical, Behavioral, Cognitive Approach*. Harper and Row. 1983.

Methods of Premarital Counseling

(Charles Taylor, *Premarital Guidance*, 42-45)

1. Structured Interviews
2. Workbooks
3. Inventories (questionnaires on the topics)
4. Courses (a program for a group)

Topics for Premarital Counseling

(Charles Taylor, *Premarital Guidance*, 40-41)

1. Communication. Does each partner feel heard by the other? Do they feel comfortable sharing feelings with each other? Does each partner understand the feelings and reasons for these feelings that the other states?
2. Conflict Resolution. Does the couple have the ability to solve problems and come to mutually agreed-upon solutions without destructive side effects?
3. Role Relationship. Does the couple have a mutually agreed-upon understanding of their marital roles, whether companionship or traditional?
4. Sexuality. Does each partner understand the other’s sexual needs and desires? Are both partners comfortable with their present sexual relationship?
5. Values, Religion, Spirituality. Does each partner understand and support the other partner’s core values, religious understandings, and spiritual practice? What are their plans for nurturing individual and couple values, as well as religious or spiritual expression?
6. Children. Do both partners want to have children? If so, how many? How will they be guided, and by whom? How will children from previous relationships be handled?
7. Family of Origin and Friends. What level of approval or disapproval of the couple’s relationship do each partner’s family of origin (parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents) and friends have? How does each partner feel about his or her own family of origin? What traits of their family of origin does each partner want to or not want to carry into their marriage?
8. Relaxation, Leisure, Interests. What are the activities each partner does for relaxation and a change of pace? What shared activities do they have? Which activities do each want to continue alone?
9. Personality/Relating Style. Does either partner act in ways that trouble or embarrass the other? What characteristics does each partner treasure in the other?
10. Finances. What resources does each partner bring to the marriage? How are the resources to be used? Have they agreed on a budget?
11. Marriage Expectations. What expectations does each partner have about marriage? How realistic or unrealistic are these expectations?