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MFT: 509 Premarital Counseling

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Direct Path Pre Marital Counseling Course.

Hello, and welcome to Direct Path Pre-Marital Counseling Course. In this course we have developed a well rounded engaging journey packaged in a 6 week course, 1 hour weekly sessions that will delve into the foundations of a strong marriage. We will learn how to work together on our strengths and growth areas, build communication, face our stressors, learn how to resolve conflict and understand each other's personality types. We will develop a team working attitude to develops our skills in all aspects of marriage to ensure a long and prosperous union. These 6 sessions will guide you, and your spouse-to-be, on a journey into what makes a marriage before it even starts. We will venture into who we are individually and who we will be together, while also learning the importance of how to remain unified during the storms of life. Homework will also be provided at the end of each session in order to further stimulate dialogue. So; Buckle your seatbelts, as we take a ride down the Direct Path to a strong a beautiful Marriage.

To begin the process , once a couple has selected us for Pre-Marital Counseling, they must complete a facilitators report through the Prepare and Enrich Program. Direct Path facilitators are trained professionals in the ares of Marriage and family development and are trained to asses couples reports. This report provides Direct Path with in-depth insight into who the couple is, it will also allow for better feedback to be provided to the couple. In order to obtain this report the couple will be provided with an online login via email to complete the Prepare/Enrich assessment. Couples should be informed that this assessment does costs a fee but assistance can be provided by Direct Path if need be. The assessment takes approximately 30 to 45 mins to complete. It is important to remind the couple that this assessment:

- ***Is NOT a test.***
- ***Will help bring understanding of their relationship in many areas.***

- ***Will not predict relational success or failure.***
- ***Will ensure the protection of their identity.***

Session 1: Intake Assessment

The intake session is our first session, this is where the Facilitator and the couple first meet. In this 1 hour session, with understanding obtained via the Facilitators Report, the trio will begin the walk into this couples journey to marriage. This is the time to explore the couples expectations for this course during the next 6 weeks, while ensuring their comfortability. This is also the time to set realistic guidelines of how the course will progress moving forward, and build the boundaries of what the course will be. It is important that the couple understands this course will:

- *Explore the couples strength and growth areas*
- *Explore communication skills*
- *Identify stressors if any and help manage them*
- *Explore conflict resolutions*
- *Assist in understanding differences and maximize teamwork*

These goals are set for couples to build a proper foundation in their relationship and go on to have a successful marriage. At the end of session the Facilitator will equip the couple with a Prepare and enrich workbook for couples, containing all of the core exercises.

Homework: Pg 33 Scope out Your Personality

Session 2: Personality

Session 2 is all about getting to know the couple a little more by exploring their personality types. Direct Path believes its important for couples to understand the personality of one another; using the facilitators report the couple was instructed to discuss their findings. The facilitator then asks:

- *Tell me about your similarities*
- *How can those be a strength for you guys?*

- *Could those similarities create any problems?*
- *Tell me about your differences*
- *Can those differences be a strength?*
- *Can those differences create problems?*

Exploring these differences in personality will help the couple understand more about expected roles or expectations in the relationship. One partner might realize in this session that the other is way more organized with financial matters, or more open to social outings than the other. It is important that our couples understand and learn how to deal with each other's personality differences. In this session the facilitator and the couple will also discuss the couples intended purity choices.

Homework exercise #1: Take assessment called Sharing Strengths and Growth Areas on page 6 of your handbooks.

Session 3: Building Strength □

Our third session starts with exploring the couples strength and growth areas. By reviewing the Facilitators report for the couple we will determine the positive couples agreement score, this will give us a better understanding of where our focus should be. We will find out how they felt about the homework given the week before, if there were any expectations, surprises, or fears that arise for the couple while discussing their strength and growth areas. The session opens up with a greeting, then moving into talking, we start by taking turns actively listening to one another without interruption. Allowing each partner to communicate the 3 strength areas that each felt the couple had, then repeating with their perceived growth areas. Afterwards we move into a discussion talking about...

- *We're you surprised by any of your partners responses?*
- *We're there any areas you strongly agreed with your partner?*
- *We're there any areas you strongly disagree with your partner?*
- *Did you have any expectations?*

The facilitator will listen to both partners and give feedback on how the strength areas are great for building a strong relationship and to reassure the couple that this is what we all want collectively. The facilitator is also talking over the growth areas while looking for ways to strengthen them. May it be, family-issues, managing finances, conflict, or communication, issues. The facilitators will point out these areas of growth most needing focus and may explore them so long as time permits.

Homework: Creating a Wish List Using Assertiveness and Active Listening Pg.8&9 we will share in session.

Session 4: Communication is key

We open session 4 with exploring how the couple felt about the homework, jumping in and reviewing how the couple felt about each other's wishlist. Allowing the the couple to talk through it, the Facilitator might want to know

- *How hard was it telling your partner about what you need or wish for?*
- *How did it feel being assertive?*
- *Did you guys actively listen yes or no?*

Exploring weather the couple heard each other's needs is very important in this session, communicating what we need from one another is a foundational part of building a strong relationship. The Facilitator report will give us a stronger understanding of the couples relationship dynamic when it comes to assertiveness, self confidence, and avoidance. If the couple has trouble in this area of communication the facilitator might walk the couple through the session having the couple avoid criticisms, listening to understand rather than judge, and to avoid blaming. Encouraging focus on good qualities in each other, giving full attention to your partner when talking and reassuring each other. In this session the facilitator and the couple will also discuss the couples desired relational structure, be it equalitarian or a sort of hierarchy; Also asking the couple to continue to use the Daily compliments done in homework for the remaining or the course is intended to help the couple reinforcement communication and intimacy.

Key points

- Sharing your thoughts, feelings, and needs in a good way are important
- Listen to understand not respond
- I” rather than You” statements.
- Avoiding criticism

Homework: Identifying most Critical Issues Pg10.

Session 5: Identifying Stressors

The Facilitator should be aware of the couples commitment level and family history of abuse at this point. Going into this session with an understand of healing, and prayer is most important. Starting the session with a greeting, the Facilitator begins by asking how they felt or feel about the homework given. Allowing time for both to discuss how they felt about the assessment, observing how the couple express these issues one by one and their level of listening.

- *How well are they working as a team to explain and communicate the issue*
- *Did they come to a conclusion*
- *We’re there any changes made*

Listening to weather the couple is hearing each other by active listening and working together to solve the issue at hand is important. If the couple is having a hard time resolving issues maybe surrounding the wedding the facilitator might work with the couple to help them figure out a better balance. Conflict will happen in our marriage, its how we deal with them that matter. Our facilitators might balance that with going through our 10 steps to resolving conflict.

1. *Time and Place (Session 4)*
2. *Problem (facilitator defines what he hears to be the problem)*
3. *Way you both contribute to the problem (List) (what role do you guys both play?)*
4. *Past unresolved attempts at settling the issue (List) (How many times was this discussed?)*
5. *Possible solutions (list 10) (can you guys work together to come up with 5 possible solutions?)*

6. *Discuss and evaluate each possible solution*
7. *Agree on 1*
8. *Agree on each partners role*
9. *Set 2nd meet if need be for follow up on progress (follow up session 5)*
10. *Reward each other with progress*

Homework: No Homework

Session 6: Ending session and recommendations.

In this session we remind the couple that this will be our last session together. At this point if the couple is harmonious, realizing the effectiveness of communicating, active listening, and resolving their conflict. Then this experience should have been exciting for them as they head towards the road of married life. Yet if they're still struggling and hesitation persists with no solutions we might want to make a referral for the couple to see a marriage family therapist before they decide to get married. It's also at this time we allow the couple to give us feedback on how they feel after taking our course, weather the course homework helped them, and any recommendations they would have on improving their experience.

Direct Path Pre Marital Counseling Course Policy

Direct Path Pre-Marital Counseling Corp. and its affiliates reserve the rights to say no to any couple who violate our company policies. Our policies are as follows:

- ❖ Any couple who misses two or more sessions are subject to be removed from the program
- ❖ Any couple who has exhibited on more than 1 occasion signs of violence, aggression, and or domestic abuse and or child sexual abuse is subject to be removed from the program and will be referred to the appropriate services.
- ❖ Sessions are only 1 hour and are extremely in depth, any couple excessively late on multiple occasions after being given repeated warning, will be subject to removal from the program.
- ❖ Couples Pre-Marital Counseling is not recommended to couples who demonstrate signs of distress, abuse, violence, arrangements, or fraudulence of any kind.
- ❖ Direct path does not reserve the right to dictate a couples sexual life. However for Christian Identifying Couples Direct Path does recommend abstinence for at least the six weeks prior to impending nuptials and during the time of this course.
- ❖