

Counseling Class
Marriage & Human Sexuality Issues

Read through all the situations below. Pick one and write out how you would respond to the situation and counsel those involved. Include in your answer what sin may be involved; relevant Bible verses that would expose that sin and encourage them to righteousness; the questions you might ask to uncover what might be going on in their Emotional; Volitional; Rational and Personal circles; and advise you would give them on how to handle the situation they are facing.

1) You have become friends with a young married couple in the church. As your friendship has developed, the wife periodically asks you practical questions about marriage and housekeeping. One day she comes to you in tears and confides that she is very frustrated with him claiming that he does not love her, does not understand her, does not talk with her and instead just goes to sleep, and is harsh when he does talk. She continues pointing out that he is not leading the family as he should since having devotions and praying together is sporadic at best, and at church he leaves her to go talk with his friends. She misses her friends from her previous church and would like for them to find a different church where they develop new friends. She says she is ready to move back home to her parents. How will you advise her?

Conflict Issues - presenting problem

Emotionally distraught young wife over lack of communication with husband and his actions that have left her feeling unloved. Added to this is some homesickness for what she has left behind

Possible sin issues:

She lists out his sin issues - primarily, he is not demonstrating that he cherishes her (Eph. 5)

Her sin issues - would have to be explored. Why has this become a crisis? Does she understand God design for marriage? In what ways is she contributing to the problems?

Main Biblical Issues:

Roles of husband and wife Ephesians 5:21-33 Colossians 3:18 1 Peter 3:1-7
Cleaving in Marriage - Genesis 2:20-25 Matthew 19:4-6 1 Corinthians 7:10-17

Observations on:

Emotional - she is distraught

Rational - her emotions are affecting her thinking, but it would take some investigation to figure out how much and what is true, what is exaggeration and her contribution to it. What does she want to achieve by her proposed actions?

Volitional - She is making choices of how she is responding and does not seem to be aware

Personal - her goals would have to be exposed. What does she believe life is about? What is her relationship to Christ? Is she striving to please God, her husband or herself?

Options / Advise -

Listen and acknowledge her emotions. Find out more about her understanding of marriage and the role God has for her within it. Go over Scriptures explaining her role. Find out what her husband is doing right (a negative focus tends to compound so that it blinds from reality and the good things that are also present). Investigate as to how she contributes to the problems about which she is complaining. Develop strategies to overcome her own failings. Identify ways in which she can be used of God to help her husband overcome his areas of weakness. Go over 1 Peter 3 and develop strategies she can use to put into practice the principles of that passage. She misses her old friends -

develop strategies by which she can develop new friends which can encourage her. Seek out husband and find out how he feeling about the marriage and whether he is interested in some help / insight in how to help his wife.

2) A young man in your church you have known since he was a young boy met a lovely young lady a couple of years earlier. They dated for a year and then married. He stops to see you one day asking advice about how to handle his wife. He is perplexed and frustrated and is wondering what he got himself into. According to his description things go well, then his wife suddenly becomes very irritable and accuses him of all sorts of things. He admits there is some truth in what she says about being sarcastic at times, somewhat thoughtless, and not as complimentary as he should be for all that she does for him. He would like to take her out more like they did when they were dating, but the expense of living on their own makes that very difficult. He also says he does get frustrated with her because she so often wants to talk late into the night and he has to be at work at 6 am. He misses hanging out with his friends. How will you advise him?

Conflict Issues - presenting problem

Young newlywed man perplexed & frustrated in mood swings of his wife. He recognizes he has weaknesses and needs to grow as a husband and desires to do so. Wife is not sensitive to the physical limitations he has in getting up early and need for sleep.

Possible sin issues: Selfishness & unkindness revealed in sarcasm toward wife. Some lack in thankfulness - taking wife for granted. She shows selfishness in wanting to talk when he is tired.

There are some communication problems. He might not be aware of the emotional component of menstrual cycle.

Main Biblical Issues:

Roles in Marriage - his love for her must be directed toward building up her godliness while continuing to mature himself. Find out more about normal communication and how he is seeking to lead her.

Kindness & thankfulness.

Speaking the truth in love - he cannot solve a problem (such as night owl vs early bird) without talking about it and working out a solution.

Observations on:

Emotional - Perplexed and frustrated. Some guilt over failures and lack of finances for dates.

Missing hanging out with old friends reveals a lack of satisfaction with life he has chosen as a married man.

Rational - Appears rational, but may be ignorant in some areas

Volitional - He is making choices of how he responds and communicates. That includes allowing her to initiate & carry on conversations late at night

Personal - uncertain. Explore what he believes about God, his role as a husband, and what he would like to accomplish in life

Options / Advise -

1) Inform him about emotional component of wife's menstrual cycle and develop strategies to be more thoughtful / sensitive during those periods and responding in a godly manner even when wife is irritable.

2) Develop strategies how he can show thoughtfulness toward her and good alternatives for

building their marriage even though they cannot afford to go out.

- 3) Clarify the characteristics of good communication including how to overcome the problem of the night owl vs early bird.

3) A couple that has been married for ten years has been coming to you for counseling. The presenting problems are usually the same issues or just variations of the same theme. She claims he does not understand her and that if he would recognize how terrible her childhood was he would be more sensitive to her needs. She claims her father was abusive to her mother and that the men in her church enabled it because the pastor always told her mother to submit to him. Adding to the complexity of the situation, she has several physical issues, but either refuses to go seek conventional medical help, or ignores the Doctor's advice if she does go. She is self-treating with information she has gained from the internet. Central in her complaint is that he will not lead her. You have her meet with older married women with good marriages for additional counsel, and though she listens to their advice, she never seems to be capable of following it. The man usually has to be prodded to say anything. He works two jobs to make ends meet and when he comes home he does household chores. He is very afraid she will get sick again. He grew up in a home with a dominant and overbearing mother. He admits that though most of the time he is calm, there are occasions when he gets very angry and explodes. If he can get any time for himself, he likes video games. What strategy will you follow to help them?

Conflict Issues - presenting problem

Couple with solid and repeating pattern of marital conflict arising from serious problems in both husband and wife.

Husband hesitant or refuses to lead. Wife dominates.

Possible sin issues:

Wife - Lack of submission. Pride (medical self-treatment is foolish & dangerous). Giving lip service to the many counselors without carrying out the godly advice

Husband - fear of future instead doing what is right and trusting God for it. Laziness in dealing with the issues - exhibited in the escape into gaming. Anger that explodes instead of dealing with issues before they reach such a critical mass.

Main Biblical Issues:

Roles of husband & wife: : Eph. 5; Col. 3; 1 Peter 3, Proverbs 31, Psalm 15

Learn from older women - Titus 2:4-5

Pride & humility; many Proverbs, James 4:6

Lack of submission - 1 Cor. 11:3; Hebrews 13:17; Proverbs 13:10; James 4:1

Fear: Prov. 3:5f; 29:25; 1 John 4:18 / Fear God, not man: Ps 118:6; Prov. 1:7; etc.

Observations on:

Emotional - A roller coaster. Fear for both - fear pushes her to control and him to yield

Rational - Claim of being rational, but controlled by emotions

Volitional - blames others for decisions - the past is not an excuse

Personal - self protection reigns supreme

Options / Advise -

This is a case that has been exhausted. Advise is given and not heeded.

Give clear assignments well within demonstrated abilities to be completed before meet again. If not done, do not meet. Be humble enough to understand that you may not be capable of

helping them - DO NOT WASTE TIME WITH THOSE WHO WILL NOT FOLLOW BIBLICAL ADVISE. Turn them over to someone else - or wait until the natural consequences make them desperate enough to follow the Biblical given

4) You are called by the husband of a woman you know well from church. He comes with her occasionally and you have done some things with them as a couple. In a desperate voice he tells you that his wife is packing her bags and preparing to leave him. He wants you to come over and talk her into staying. He admits that he has been unfaithful and he does, on occasion, drink too much and beat her. Now he realizes how much he loves her and needs her. What will you say to him? How would you deal with both of them? She professes to be a Christian.

Conflict Issues - presenting problem

Wife is fed up and leaving husband. Husband is desperate to keep her from leaving.

Possible sin issues: Him: Infidelity, drunkenness, physical abuse of wife

Her - she has reached her limit, but forgiveness will be an issue to prevent bitterness

Why did she allow him to abuse her / stay with him after he did? Has there been effort to deal with these issues in the past?

Main Biblical Issues:

1 Corinthians 7. Wife leaving husband. Also Matthew 5 & 19 - adultery / divorce

His adultery, drunkenness and abuse - all contrary to characteristics of a believer - 1 Cor. 6

His salvation ?

Observations on:

Emotional - Wife is obviously very upset. He is desperate - but why?

Rational - Wife is resolved to remove herself from the situation. He is grasping. Says he realizes he loves her - but is that the truth? Why does he want her to stay? Why has he treated her as he has in the past? Why would that change?

Volitional - She is choosing to leave him. He has made many very bad choices. He is choosing to try to rescue the situation and is crying out for help. Possible opportunity

Personal - Her - unknown. Him - he is recognizing his marriage is more important to him than he has acted in the past - but why is it important now? Pride? Repentance of sin? Opportunity to direct him to the gospel.

Options / Advise -

1) Find out plan of wife - where is she going? What is her plan? Is this temporary or permanent?

2) Find out what has created the crises?

3) Why does she need to be prevented from leaving tonight? Why can't this be resolved after both calm down and can deal with issues more rationally. THEIR CRISES DOES NOT MAKE IT YOUR CRISES - this is obviously a problem that has been ongoing for quite a while.

4) If you are available, you can try to talk to wife and husband that night - or just husband. If not available (for whatever reason). Make an appointment to talk with him the next day and her when she is willing to talk. Then have both come in to talk.