



## Pre-Marital Mentoring

We live in a country where 37% of all first marriages end in divorce and over 57% of all second marriages fail. 2.2 million people marry each year, however an alarming 1.1 million people divorce. Marriages last an average of less than 10 years. These statistics apply to all of the population and sadly the Christians of America have proven not be that much different from the rest of the country.

The family itself is under assault from many sources that seek to redefine the traditional and biblical definition of family to suit their particular cause. As an example, the homosexual lobby is attempting to have homosexual marriage and adoption legal in many states. Many large companies are giving in to the pressure of powerful influence groups and providing health insurance and other benefits for unmarried couples and homosexuals.

Yet from the beginning God did not intend for people to divorce. "For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel..." (Malachi 2:16). And Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees in the New Testament said "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let no man separate." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way." (Matthew 19:4-8)

This pre-marital counseling program has been developed by the elders of our church in response to the growing need for Christians to properly understand the sacred covenant originally established by God with Adam and Eve. It is our desire that by completing this pre-marital counseling program, many of the potential surprises and pitfalls of your new marriage may be eliminated.

The marital bond was the first covenant relationship set up by God and your marriage should be treated as the life-long commitment that God intends for it to be. Your marriage is not only a covenant between each of you; it is also a covenant with Almighty God. Paul in speaking to the Ephesians clearly speaks to the theological importance placed on the marriage covenant: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31-32) Paul is symbolizing the relationship of Christ and His Church with that of a husband and wife. We want you to place the same importance on this holy union that God places on it. Your love for each other is meant to include commitment, intimacy and passion.