

Marriage Counseling: A Christian Approach To Counseling Couples



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Synopsis

Marriages are in trouble today. That is clear. Effective methods of combating this trend are less evident. Counselors, pastors and social workers need more than mere theories or mere moralizing. They need a practical and comprehensive model for understanding couples and their problems. They need a thoroughly Christian perspective that is biblical, compassionate and human. Everett Worthington provides this in an integrated, biblically based theory of marriage and marriage therapy with analysis at three levels: the individual, the couple and the family. The model he has constructed, with techniques drawn from the major psychological schools, is standard enough to guide counselors in actual interventions and powerful enough to produce change. A thoroughgoing overview of the assessment process includes practical, workable guidelines for: creating realistic, mutually-agreeable goals for counselor and clients; estimating the number of sessions needed to reach those goals; and planning the actual assessment, intervention and termination sessions. Next Worthington offers specific techniques for enhancing cooperative change, intimacy, communication, conflict resolution and forgiveness within the marriage. But keeping couples from slipping back into old patterns is one of the counselor's most difficult tasks. So Worthington concludes with suggestions for solidifying change and effectively concluding the counseling relationship. Here is a text that will be a standard for counselors, pastors and mental health professionals in the years to come.

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Customer Reviews

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Everett L. Worthington Jr. (Ph.D., University of Missouri) is professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is a licensed clinical psychologist and former executive director of the Templeton Foundation's A Campaign for Forgiveness Research. Worthington has studied forgiveness since the 1980s and has published more than two hundred articles and papers on forgiveness, marriage and family, psychotherapy and virtue in a wide variety of journals and magazines. He was the founding editor of *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal* and sits on the editorial boards of several professional journals. He has appeared on *Good Morning America*, CNN and *The 700 Club* and been featured in award-winning documentary movies on forgiveness such as *The Power of Forgiveness* and *The Big Question*. He is the author of seventeen books including *Handbook of Forgiveness*, *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling* and *Forgiving and Reconciling*.

An excellent book. It has great encouragement for the Christian Counselor.

I am satisfied with this product and believe the item will compliment any counseling. Glad I placed this order. Great material.

I enjoy reading books that may help "decode" what is happening in relationships and how to help. So far, I have enjoyed this book.

The author's experience in counseling is shared, and is very helpful in a practical way. A worthwhile book if you are in the counseling profession.

In writing a critical evaluation of this book, positive and negative features were found. Dr. Worthington's basic philosophy was that marriage counseling should allow couples to draw closer to Christ as well as eradicating the "presenting problems" (174). His book, however, did not illustrate how a counselor was to draw a couple closer to God if both spouses were non-Christians. Dr. Worthington's subscription for forgiveness seemed more appropriate in building intimacy: "Read scripture and pray together," "Share information with spouse," "Share meals together," "affirm

commitment to each other," and "incorporate rituals" (58). Even though Dr. Worthington had no evidence to make such a claim, he stated, "bitterness is often revealed in diseases of the body" (154). It seemed farfetched to believe that people who complained of a stiff neck were actually rebellious, or that a person who suffered from back pain was being "nagged" by someone. Dr. Worthington's suggestion for couples to reenact an argument, reverse roles, and then redo the original reenactment was insightful. He predicted that people would grow tired of replaying the event multiple times, thus reducing hostile feelings and yielding "improvement" in the area of conflict (281). Dr. Worthington pointed out that a simple assignment such as having the couple read a book aloud together could result in either building intimacy or causing additional conflict, which is why he subscribes to a three-session assessment. The last chapter of the book was devoted to "professional commitment," however Dr. Worthington did a poor job in conveying the magnitude of responsibility bestowed upon counselors. He urged people to "examine yourself seriously to determine your competency," but he never suggested that counselors examine their hearts to see if it is aligned with God. He neglected to mention that daily self-examination was critical in providing Christ-centered intervention. Instead of "What would Jesus do," counselors should ask, "What can Jesus Christ do through me?" and "How can I align myself to be more like Jesus?" Overall, the book is a good marriage counseling "handbook" since it offered useful counseling tips, especially in the areas of joining, assessing, goal setting, and changing behaviors. Although the book was written for "professionals" in the counseling field, Dr. Worthington refrained from the overuse of "technical" words. His conscientious effort to keep the book informative yet practical made the book fairly easy to read. From a Christian standpoint, he did an excellent job in incorporating Christian principles into the traditional method of counseling. Every pastor or Christian counselor ought to read this book because it provides a detailed "blue print" of how to conduct marriage counseling. Even if one does not intend to counsel married couples, this book would enhance one's understanding of communication patterns and distancing behaviors.

As a pastor I bought this book to help with some marriage counseling I am doing at the church I pastor. It has been a great help and is an easy read. While I don't follow everything he says 100%, I am using it as a major resource. I have three books on marriage counseling and like this one the best.

This work is very simple and practical. Good for a student with an undergrad counseling major or a pastor who is interested in expanding his pastoral counseling abilities.

Transaction was smooth, product exactly as described.

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