

## Is Premarital Guidance Important To Divorce?

Ronald Rachmat<sup>1</sup>, Tjutjun Setiawan<sup>2</sup>, Fries Waty<sup>3</sup>, Fitry Riny Lasmaria<sup>4</sup>,  
Yanto Paulus Hermanto<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>College of Theology Kharisma Bandung, Indonesia

[ronald.rachmat@gmail.com](mailto:ronald.rachmat@gmail.com), [tjutjun.setiawan65@gmail.com](mailto:tjutjun.setiawan65@gmail.com), [frieswaty15@gmail.com](mailto:frieswaty15@gmail.com), [fitryrinyl@gmail.com](mailto:fitryrinyl@gmail.com),  
[y\\_paulus@yahoo.co.id](mailto:y_paulus@yahoo.co.id)

### Abstract

*Divorce in Christian families is seen as a wrong decision and against God's will. Although there are some views from church leaders worldwide regarding divorce, divorce in Christian marriages is not justified. However, based on data from the Indonesian statistical center, divorce cases in Indonesia from 2011 to 2016 have increased significantly. Looking at the facts of divorce cases and the factors that cause divorce, the church has made effort to overcome or reduced the risk of divorce in Christian marriages. One form of this effort to overcome divorce is to provide premarital guidance for Christian couples who want to get married. This study will describe the importance of premarital guidance so that from this nation it can help the church to understand the importance of premarital guidance better and carry it out with sincerity and for prospective partners better to understand their respective duties and responsibilities before God so that when conflicts occur in their domestic life, they were able to cope without divorce.*

### Keywords

premarital guidance; divorce



## I. Introduction

Christian marriage is a very interesting topic to study. Many things are always hotly discussed in Christianity. Many things are about divorce. In general, a divorce for Christians is seen as a wrong decision or against God's will. However, divorce is not uncommon among Christians.

There are different views of various church leaders around the world regarding divorce and remarriage. These views on divorce and remarriage are grouped into three groups: (1) figures who agree with divorce but disapprove of remarriages, such as William, Heth, and Gordon Wenham; (2) were church figures who approved of divorce and remarriage such as Martin Luther, Joe Trull, Craig S. Keener, and Stanley Grenz. (3) are church figures who do not approve of divorce and remarriage, namely John Feinberg, Paul Feinberg, and Norman Geisler.

Eka Darmaputer revealed that Christian marriage is an inseparable marriage. It was further explained that Christian marriage has three principles: (1) Christian marriage is monogamous. Namely, one husband for one wife and vice versa; (2) Christian marriages based on fidelity or fidelity; (3) is indissolubility or the principle of indissolubility.

In the view of the Roman Catholic Church, divorce is also not justifiable. The Roman Catholic Church has a strong thing about divorce: there is no divorce for God's people, even though; even marriage resulted in such suffering, but they still had to endure the marriage. The Protestant church's view is not as strong as the Roman Catholic church on divorce; some exceptions make divorce unavoidable. However, even those exceptions cannot make the justifiable divorce matter.

John Stott argued that based on the teachings of Jesus and set aside the phrase "exception," that divorce and remarriage are adultery. Jesus stated this plainly, and the consequence is sin. Here is Jesus' statement: if a husband (of course a wife too) divorces his wife, and then remarries, either he commits adultery (Matt. 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18) or because the assumption is that the woman he divorced and remarried, he also causes her to commit adultery (Matt. 5:32; Mark 10:12). Furthermore, a man (and of course a woman too) who marries a divorcee commits adultery as well (Matt. 5:32; Luke 16:18).

Divorce in a Christian marriage is not justified. However, based on data from the Indonesian statistical center, divorce cases in Indonesia since 2011 - 2016 have increased significantly from 276,791 divorce cases in 2011 to 365,633 divorce cases; of course, Christians are included. According to various studies conducted, divorce occurs due to several factors such as; sexual dissatisfaction for husband/wife, economy, infidelity, not having children, cultural differences, lack of affection between husband/wife, disharmony, and differences in principles and values in life.

Looking at the facts of divorce cases and the factors that cause divorce, the church has tried to overcome or reduce the risk of divorce in Christian marriages. One form of this effort to overcome divorce is to provide premarital guidance for Christian couples who want to decide to marry. In general, premarital guidance is considered as the RI solution for handling divorce cases in Christian marriages.

Based on the introduction above the author, will describe the importance of premarital guidance so that this explanation can help the church to beto understand the importance of premarital guidance better carry it out with sincerity and for prospective partners better to understand the duties and responsibilities of each before God so that when conflict occurs in their domestic life, they can resolve it without divorce.

## II. Review of Literature

### Christian Marriage

From the beginning of creation, marriage was God's idea and not man's idea. God; God, man, and woman and blessed them (Gen. 1:26-27). It can be said that marriage is the first institution ordained by God and willed by God Himself, and it was done before humans fell into sin. As for marriage itself, namely: (1) Be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28); (2) reciprocal relationships that help each other between husband and wife, comfort each other; (3) mutual love and self-giving love for one another.

Marriage is a relationship formed because of the agreement and love between a man and a woman. But it is also a bond Butted by God in one flesh before God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 2:24 & 1:28). The man and woman who are united in this marriage are then also called to reflect the love of Jesus Christ for His church through their relationship (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Realizing that marriage is God's idea, God has determined things in marriage as follows : (1) monogamous, a man is only allowed to marry a woman (Gen. 1:28 and Gen. 2:22); (2) is Heterosexual, a man must marry a woman (Gen. 1:26-28, 1 Cor. 6:9-10 and Gen. 2:21-25); (3) holy, a man may only be united with his wife, and vice versa (Gen. 2:24, and 1 Cor. 7:1-5); (4) marriage can only be separated by death or for life (Rom. 7:2-3, Mal. 2:16 and Mark. 12:18-25); (5) the faith (2 Cor. 6:14); (6) leave and unite, meaning that men and women must leave their dependence on their parents, and unite with their wives so that they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24); (7) equal and complementary (Gen. 1:26-27, Eph. 5:22-23).

### **III. Discussion**

#### **3.1 Divorce in Christian Marriages**

Bible says that marriage is an idea from God, not from man. The book of Genesis records that God created not only one person but two people, namely Adam and Eve, and they formed one family, a family that God Himself blessed. God wants the family to be full of peace and peace, not the other way around. However, when humans fall into sin, it is not uncommon for family relationships to fall apart and even lead to divorce, making the marriage fail.

Divorce is a term whithatans that the termination of the contractual relationship between a husband and wife is an act that is considered deviant in Christian teachings. According to academic journals on theological review of divorce, it is stated that divorce is not something that should be justified with the following theological studies : (1) married couples should not divorce (Matt. 19:6). God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16); (2) only death can separate (Rom. 7:2-3); (3) when adultery occurs, the solution is not divorce but forgiveness 70x7 times (Matt. 7:2-3). When divorce occurs, it is because of sin and the hardness of the human heart (Matt. 19:8); (4) cases of domestic violence (Mal. 2:16) are not justified for divorce, in any situation only recommended separation. Referral recommended after a personality change (1 Cor. 7:11); (5) in 1 Cor. 17:13-15 records the case of a married couple outside the Christian faith, and one of them believes in the Lord Jesus. If her unbelieving spouse threatens her to leave Christ, then she must remain faithful to Christ, even if she is divorced (not divorced). Divorce must come from an unbeliever.

According to Atkinson, divorce is not allowed because marriage is more than a status, namely a moral commitment that must be kept or an agreement that cannot be "severed" with divorce. In the Bible t, there are at least four purposes of Christian marriage, namely: (1) to glorify God (Isa. 43:7); (2) realizing the unity of mutual help and love (Gen. 2:18 and Eph. 5:22-23); (3) to give birth to divine offspring (Gen. 1:28; Mal. 3:15) and (4) to fulfill sexual needs (1 Cor. 7:2-5) properly.

At least ten causes make a marriage damaged or even divorced: post-marriage changes, offspring/children, more visible differences in principles, infidelity, violence in marriage, indifference to one another, cold love, sexuality, economics, and differences in priorities. Marriage is God's plan for humans, and God wants marriage to be once in a lifetime. A divorce is an act thaGod opposed if t; it is a divorce, then it is caused by the hardness of the human heart who does not want to obey God.

#### **3.2 Premarital Guidance in Christian Marriages**

The word guidance is taken from English, namely, guidance which comes from the verb to guide, which means to guide or help; generally, guidance can be interpreted as help or guidance. The word guidance was first defined in 1995 in the year's book of education; namely, guidance is a process in helping individuals through their efforts to discover and develop their ability to obtain personal happiness and benefits in social relationships. Meanwhile, a prenu is defined as the period or the priobeforeagreement or binding between a man and a woman, who wish to unite as husband and wife officially based on marriage laws, religion, and government.

Premarital guidance is one of the pastoral duties in which there is a conversation with a potential partner about matters relating to confirmation and blessing in Christian marriages. Howard Clinebell argues that the purpose of conducting premarital counseling is to help each prospective married couple to create a mutually constructive relationship by mutually enriching each other in marriage.

Premarital guidance is a task carried out by a church pastor to two prospective Christian couples who are about to get married. This activity is two-way between pastors and Christian couples who are about to get married to understand Christian marriage and provide guidance on how to live in a Christian marriage and deal with conflicts in the household.

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), divorce comes from *divorce*, which means breaking a husband-wife relationship. PHN Simanjuntak defines divorce as the termination of a marriage by a cause based on a judge based on the demands of one or both parties in the marriage. So simply divorce is a decision made by a husband and wife to end their marriage.

Marriage and divorce are things that are sometimes unavoidable when problems in the household come. Divorce is often considered the most appropriate solution in ending marital problems, but divorce is wrong in Christian marriages. However, there are still cases of divorce in Christian marriages. To reduce the divorce rate, the church has tried to provide premarital guidance to couples who are getting married. The purpose of premarital guidance has been explained previously: to guide prospective husband-wife couples in dealing with marital struggles.

Looking at the purpose of the premarital guidance, the authors will analyze why premarital guidance is important in reducing divorce and even breaking the chain of divorce in Christian marriages, how effective premarital guidance is in reducing divorce, and how premarital guidance can be a solution in reducing divorce in Christian marriages.

Based on the book written by M. Bons Strom entitled *What is Pastoring*, explains that the duties and functions of pastors in general are, in general, and ad visit congregations; (2) serving the congregation in all aspects (soul, body, and spirit); (3) preaching God's Word amid the congregation's personal life situation; (4) guiding the congregation to apply the truth of God's Word in daily life.

In providing one way to guide the congregation to apply the truth of God's Word in daily life, premarital guidance for couples who want to get married. Christians have known and understood premarital guidance as a preparation for building a household taught by the pastor or church leader. Many churches make premarital guidance a requirement before the wedding blessing ceremony in the church. Guidance is a process of providing continuous and systematic assistance to someone to solve problems that make that person have the ability to understand himself (self-understanding), the ability to accept himself (self-acceptance), direct himself (self-direction), and realize himself (self-realization) by the potential in achieving self-adjustment with the environment, both family, school, and community.

In the book *Guidance and Counseling in educational institutions*, WS Winkel definition guidance divided into four meanings, namely: (1) efforts to equip a person with knowledge, experience, and information about himself; (2) a way to assist a person in understanding and using all opportunities available for his personal development efficiently and effectively; (3) services provided to many people so that they can make decisions, set goals appropriately, and develop realistic plans so that they can adjust satisfactorily in their environment; (4) a process of providing assistance or assistance to someone in terms of understanding themselves, connecting their understanding of themselves with the environment, selecting, determining, and making plans according to their self-concept and environmental demands. Guidance is an effort that aims to provide guidance, information, teaching, understanding, understanding of oneself, the social environment, and the struggles that are happening or may occur.

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, premarital consists of two words, namely "pra," which means before, and "marriage, age," which means an agreement between a man and a woman in an official husband-wife bond. So, premarital guidance is a business that aims to provide guidance, information, teaching, understanding, understanding oneself, the social environment, and the struggles in domestic or family life.

According to Garry R. Collins, premarital guidance is preparing and how to help a person, couple, and even other family members to create a happy marital atmosphere and build a healthy and satisfying marital relationship. Donald Capps argues that premarital counseling is an effort to minimize the possibility of problems in marriage. Prospective husband and wife are given the ability to identify and overcome the problem in the marriage commitment. James D. Hamilton, in his book, *The Ministry of Pastoral Counseling* describes 5 goals to be achieved in premarital guidance, namely: (1) married couples can understand the role and mindset of each partner in the upcoming marriage. (2) couples who are about to get married can find out the expectations of potential marriage partners. (3) couples who are getting married can understand the weaknesses and strengths of their partners. (4) couples who are about to get married can find solutions in dealing with the weaknesses and strengths of their partners. (5) Couples about to get married can understand the problems when the prospective husband and wife enter into marriage.

Premarital guidance is educational and aims to guide prospective married couples who are effective in overcoming marital problems. Pre premarital guidance can help prospective couples who want to get married independently identify things that can become a couple's interpersonal conflict and develop communication skills.

Implementing premarital guidance takes the readiness of each individual to accept every material taught. Good communication between the prospective husband and wife and the coach is very influential in the effectiveness of premarital guidance. Therefore, premarital guidance counselors must have special skills in providing guidance. Before starting premarital guidance, it is better if the coach has knowledge and understanding of the customs in the local community related to the community's understanding of marriage so that the guidance provided is relevant and can be done practically. Guidance can be carried out at least eight times in meetings conducted by counselors or counselors and prospective married couples. This meeting can be divided into three parts: (1) a joint meeting with potential partners; (2a) a private meeting with each potential partner; Finally, a reunion with a potential partner. Each meeting can take between one and two hours.

Billy Graham, a revival figure in the United States in the 20th century, proclaimed 6 things that must be done by premarital guidance counselors as follows: (1) congratulate prospective partners on their initiative to provide guidance before their marriage; (2) giving advice to surrender his heart and life to Jesus Christ, if he wants to experience God's inclusion and guidance in his life and marriage; (3) ensure that the marriage takes place in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:39); (4) guiding the prospective spouse to improve the factors that can undermine the success of marriage, by asking God's blessing and control over his life and the life of his partner through prayer requests, understanding and living all the knowledge he can get about a Christ-centered home; (5) giving advice to continue to be embedded in a church that attaches importance to God's Word, and sets the heart to communicate freely and sincerely with their partners about all aspects of life; (6) pray together to ask for God's blessings, inclusion and guidance in each other's lives and marriages that will soon be entered into.

Premarital guidance is a service provided by pastors/church leaders to prospective couples about to get married. The purpose of this premarital guidance is to guide, provide understanding, provide explanations, provide an overview of married life, and provide

practical examples in dealing with marital struggles, so that prospective married couples come to survive in their marriage. Premarital guidance will be effectively carried out by pastors who are relevant to the prospective husband and wife.

### **3.3 The Importance of Premarital Guidance as an Effort to Break the Chain of Divorce in Christian**

Marriage is indeed a momentum that is lovers are always expected to enter a new life, namely building a household with loved ones. But it should be realized that marriage is a simple but complex thing. Marriage has extensive struggles that create joy and sorrow in human life. Therefore, preparing for the wedding is the right thing. There is nothing wrong with the decision to marry; what is wrong is making decisions without preparation. Preparation for marriage preparation for a reception or wedding party and emotional maturity for the prospective couple are entering a complex household life.

Premarital guidance is the most appropriate thing to do before deciding to get married. According to Robert F. Stahmann and William J. Heibert, the importance of premarital counseling is to break the myth about marriage. The first myth is the understanding that the couple is a coincidence that makes the paradigm that marriage does not need to be carefully thought out. Second is the view of marriage which is a mere formality/demands of formality/demands Preparatory Course for Family Life”, three important reasons for premarital guidance are explained. First, because family life firsts to be carefully prepared. Second, because premarital guidance provides an understanding of the nature of marriage, finally, premarital guidance will require time, methods (methods), and cooperation from various related fields. Premarital guidance can help prospective couples who want to marry build a healthy family, build a healthy family life, develop children who can develop their personalities, and establish good relationships with others. Formal guidance provides the right and strong foundation for couples who are expected to help prospective married couples make the right and correct decisions in carrying out their marriage.

James D. Hamilton argues that premarital guidance is very important to prepare prospective husband and wife couples. In premarital guidance, there is basic guidance given in understanding married life in husband-wife relationships. Therefore, Hamilton also stated that premarital guidance counselors must conduct personal coaching first to personally get to know the counselee. In this approach, the counselor has a function: a questioner, listener, analyzer, and provides a response.

According to Gerry R. Collins, there are at least five things to pay attention to. Here are five things that are important to consider in premarital guidance: (1) the decision to be ready to marry (reason for marriage, partner background, age difference, attitude towards marriage, environment, and spiritual maturity); (2) know and be ready to face pressures in married life, which means that each prospective partner must know the things that must be adapted to the partner, and if there are pressures in married life, they can deal with them together; (3) know yourself (the ability to be able to see your site honestly important honestly); (4) knowing the biblical view of marriage; (5) planning a wedding.

Premarital guidance is important because many people feel wrong in making their choices or experience difficulties adjusting to family life. Many people are in a hurry to make decisions without considering to ring many aspects of married life. Judging from the intent and premarital guidance is important, judging from the intent. The purpose of premarital guidance seeks to help prospective couples do careful planning, which is a marriage that cannot be divorced by anything, and look at the factors that cause the divorce to occur in a marital relationship, then juxtaposed with the purpose of premarital guidance,



it can be stated that premarital guidance which includes the process of educating, teaching, providing, prepare, ensure, and challenge every prospective couple who will marry with a broad understanding of marriage can prevent divorce. This is because prospective couples who are about to get married are already provided with information about the nature of marriage.

#### IV. Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that premarital guidance is something for couples who are getting married and is carried out by the church/servant of God who is authorized and competent in dealing with the problem of premarital guidance or counseling, where couples who are getting married can understand and understand their duties and responsibilities as husband and wife and understand that the formation of a family is from God and how God plays a role in family life and the lives of believers so that all conflicts and problems that may arise and occur in the household can be found solutions and solutions by submission before the Lord Jesus Christ who can solve all problems so that these couples can avoid divorce as a way out of the problem.

For prospective married couples, preparing various wedding needs, arranging a schedule is indeed necessary. However, mental preparation in entering marriage is more important than necessary. By following premarital guidance, prospective couples will be equipped with the knowledge to solve problems by discussing the source of problems in marriage so that they are not wrong in making decisions. If you want to have a married life by a marriage that is far from divorce, then deciding to do decide is the right thing. For servants of God or pastors, provide relevant guidance to each prospective couple who will marry because divorce cases in Christian marriages will be reduced.

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