

Do I Need Counseling?

Every marriage and family has problems from time to time. Sometimes problems can become difficult to manage and address—at least with our own limited knowledge, ability and power. [FamilyLife Ministry](#) has identified four levels of problems in a home and different options of help that could be available to you.

Level One: Basic Issues or Problems

Are you facing issues in your family that stem from things like selfishness, pride or a lack of knowledge about how to make your marriage work or raise your children? Here are some examples:

- Difficulty in resolving conflicts in your marriage
- Consistent lying in a teen or pre-teen child
- Little or no deep communication with spouse
- Poor financial habits
- Misunderstandings about intimacy issues in your marriage

This is not a complete list, just some examples of basic issues you may be experiencing. If problems exist on this level, you can begin seeking help. Stop by after a weekend service to have someone pray for you, schedule time for solitude and give God uninterrupted time to give you direction and clarity. Seek out a trusted friend in your [small group](#) who can provide prayer and advice, or connect with a pastor as they may have knowledge about books and resources available to help you. The support of a [hopelink minister](#) can also be a source of inspiration and encouragement during tough times.

Level Two: More Serious Problems

Here your problems may go beyond basic issues, but may not be out of control.

- Communication breakdown in marriage
- Not sure the two of you are in love anymore
- Priorities are out of line and the importance of your marriage or family falls below jobs, hobbies, etc.
- A teenager is becoming more difficult to handle
- Frustration over issues in your family life is a prevailing emotion
- You and your spouse are not on the same page when it comes to disciplining children

Again, there is a lot of help out there for you. You may want to talk to a pastor, consider attending a marriage conference, or get the guidance and strategies of a Christian therapist. Pulling away and focusing on realigning your lives and marriage can be a beneficial thing to do.

Level Three: Deeper Issues

Are you at wits end and don't feel like your family or marriage can survive unless something drastic happens? You're feeling 'stuck' and have a sense of desperation that things may never change. You may be in need of professional counseling if you're at this level.

- All or most of the communication between you and your spouse ends in anger or hurt feelings
- Physical intimacy is all but gone in your relationship
- The routine of life keeps you going, but all the joy is drained from your life
- You've contemplated separation or divorce
- Your child is in full, all-out rebellion
- Issues of drugs, alcohol or sex has entered into your teenager's life
- You've experienced a significant loss (death in the family or job loss) and you feel unable to move forward

Before your situation gets any worse, seek professional counseling.

Level Four: Crisis

Maybe you've totally given up on your marriage. Perhaps you're experiencing separation or you've talked to an attorney about filing for divorce. You need immediate help and it would be wise to talk to a pastor for guidance, alternatives and help. Here you can be led to resources that can begin to help change and reshape your perspective and situation. Again, great help is out there and God is in the business of changing lives, so actively pursue counseling and help.

- Separation or divorce is in the process (attend [DivorceCare](#))
- An affair is active or has recently ended
- [Drugs, Alcohol or Pornography](#) has a hold on you or your spouse's life
- You have lost control of your teen
- Your teen is extremely depressed and talks of [suicide](#)
- You are sure your teen is abusing drugs and/or alcohol

If you're at this stage, please seek help immediately—many times it's **not too late**. There is hope and this comes from an understanding that God is in control. He knows the innermost details of what's going on and that he loves you. Seek God first and others for the help in your time of need.

If you have any further concerns, comments or questions, please call 651.429.9227.