

Relationships

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon emphasizes the importance of taking time to get to know people, building genuine friendships, and being honest and open in relationships to avoid premature relationships and build a strong foundation for marriage.

Duration: 55:56

Scripture: Proverbs 31:10-12, Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 7:25, Ephesians 5:27-28, Ephesians 5:33

Topics: "Relationships"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of media and its negative influence on society, particularly in the context of relationships and marriages. The speaker emphasizes the importance of protecting oneself from the harmful effects of media, especially in an urban environment like New York City. The speaker shares personal experiences of falling into destructive relationships and making regrettable decisions due to the influence of media. The sermon highlights the need to be discerning and not be swayed by the portrayal of unhealthy relationships in movies, as they can lead to the breakdown of marriages and the destruction of the foundation of love.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. That's very kind of you. I hope you still feel the same way when I'm done.

You know, if you came tonight thinking that I'm going to just unfold a whole bunch of do's and don'ts for relationships, I'm not going to do that tonight because I might in small measure. But you have classes and seminars and such like for that. This evening, I want to speak to you, as some would prefer that I speak to you as a pastor, and that's quite okay with me to do that, but I'm a father and a grandfather as well.

And I'd like to speak to you as a father this evening, and I'd like to speak to you as a grandfather if you'd permit me to do that tonight. I have been married, this is my 35th year of marriage this year. I don't say this just because I'm in a pulpit, but I do love Pastor Teresa more than I ever have in my life.

She knows that. We both feel that way about each other. And it's been an incredible journey together.

We are each other's best friend. There's nothing in my life she doesn't know, and there's nothing in her life I don't know. We pray together, we share together, and marriage is a good thing.

And I've found incredible, incredible fulfillment in marriage. I met Pastor Teresa when she was 18. Of course, she wasn't called Pastor Teresa back then.

I wasn't Pastor Carter. I was 19. We were both in university.

And the moment, the first time I saw her walk through the door, I just said, that's what I want. She didn't share that sentiment, but I pursued her and won her heart. And, you know, I've heard a lot of stuff on dating and things like that.

Well, I wish I had had some of that. We both weren't saved. And our first date, we ate Kentucky Fried Chicken in a phone booth in Canada.

And phone booths are very small. There was hardly room for the chicken in the phone booth. Nevertheless, we were poor students, and we loved each other.

And it's been an incredible journey. I don't know how to share this with you. You know, in this church, I was thinking tonight as we were worshiping, one of the great, great blessings of Times Square Church, we have 71 full-time staff in this church.

There's eight elders and all of the pastors. And every marriage in the leadership in this church is a strong marriage. Do you know how rare that is in our generation? I thank God for that.

Strong marriages, fulfilling marriages, growing marriages. I rejoice in a season where marriage is under incredible attack, and godly relationships are scorned and scoffed at. I thank God, and in the house of God, where truth is loved and truth is appreciated, the fulfillment of marriage as God intended it to be is still within reach of all of us.

There's nothing next to salvation that will ever be more fulfilling than when you find the right person to be your life partner. There's no other relationship like it except the one with Christ. And I'm going to share a little bit about that with you tonight.

In the books of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul the Apostle gives relationship advice, once to married people, another time to single people, and a third time exhorting us to care enough about other people to put their needs above our own. Now each time, Paul uses similar words as those that are found in 1 Corinthians 7.25. I'm going to read to you from the Amplified Bible. Now concerning virgins, that means the marriageable maidens, I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give my opinion and advice as one who by the Lord's mercy is rendered trustworthy and faithful.

Paul says, I'm about to speak some things to you, but they're not by commandment of God. He said, I love God, and these are the qualifications I stand before you with tonight. I can honestly say I love you, and that's not just a pulpit thing, I mean that, I do.

I care about you, I care about your future. I care about you finding the fullness of life as it is meant to be lived in Christ. And Paul said, I'm not giving you a bunch of rules.

He said, I'm going to stand before you as one who has found the faithfulness of God. I believe that I've been trustworthy in what God has given me to do. And these are not commandments, but these are strong opinions that I hold.

You see, I've been married now, it's 35 years. I've been in ministry for almost an equal amount of time. I have traveled widely.

I have seen good marriages, and I've seen many bad marriages. I've seen marriage fulfilling, even in the context of ministry, and I've seen ministry marriages that are a disaster right out of the gate. I've counseled many people, even in this church, who've come in with horrific situations, only to realize that they weren't really grounded in what real relationship with the opposite sex is all about.

And I'm hoping to share some things tonight that will help you. Now, I first fell in love at the age of 13. About once an hour.

I knew something was happening in my body when at school, I didn't care anymore whether we won or lost the sporting event, as long as girls were on my team. I remember, I grew up in a mining town, and there were back alleys behind our homes. Our homes almost all looked the same in a mining town, and behind our home was a gravel laneway, not very wide, and then there was other yards right in the back.

And there was a girl that lived right across the back from my house, and of course I fell in love with her as well when I was 13. She was out in her yard one time in the summer. My mom and dad had asked me to trim a tree in the backyard, so I went out in the backyard, I took off my shirt, and I took the trimmers and I flexed every muscle I could find in my body as I was trimming the tree, knowing that surely this was going to get her attention.

And so after trimming and flexing and trimming and flexing, finally she called me, Carter, she called me, and it was like a dream come true. I heard my name came from her lips, and she called me, and I said, yes, holding the trimmers. She said, you are so skinny, I can count all your ribs from way over here.

So I picked up my shirt and put it back on, went in the house and laid on the couch, and of course my mom would say, what's wrong, and how do you explain when your life has been destroyed, what exactly is... At the age of 15, I fell in love again, and this time I used to play hockey, and some people said I was reasonably good at it, and I fell in love again, and I left organized sports to pursue a relationship, because I was on a team that traveled a lot. I was actually 16, I think at the time, and we were out of town, practicing throughout the week on a lot of weeknights, and then Friday night there were games, and Saturday there were games, and quite often they were out of town. And so I left organized sports to pursue this relationship, and to this day I regret this decision, because it led me to a place of drinking, it led me to a place of hanging around with people I shouldn't have been with, and doing things I shouldn't have done, brought discouragement and depression into my life.

I wish to God, honestly, to this day I had stayed playing hockey. Take time, please, to be young. You know, society is pushing its children into early sexualization today.

This whole society is backslidden, deeply and darkly backslidden. We have the same spirit that's come on previous societies. Whenever a society degenerates, it becomes sexually obsessed, and at every level of society, and this society today is pushing young people that are here today into an early sexualization, pushing you into an arena for which you are unprepared, and actually robbing you of your youth.

Enjoy being a child and being young. For those that are 13 and 12 here, and those that are 14, 15, 16, you're going to grow up soon enough, and you know the odds of you marrying anybody that you know right now is about 99.99% against it. You're literally not going to marry anybody you know in your high

school, or middle school, or wherever you're coming from, so take time to enjoy your youth.

Take time to hang out with a lot of different people. Have fun. Don't let society push you into being an adult before the time.

That time will come, but don't lose. Don't be robbed because you'll regret it later on. There'll be an emptiness inside.

You're suddenly 22 years old. You're married. You've got two kids, and you feel like you've missed life, and I've had to minister to people like that, and unfortunately, it's too late.

That part of youth has been lost because these young people were pushed into a sexualization, a preoccupation with themselves, their sexuality, and the opposite sex, too young. You know, they say it's just puppy love, but it's real to the dogs. Here's a rule for you.

As long as you are under the roof of your parents and the care of your parents, up to whatever age that is, the scripture says, children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with promise, and here's the promise, that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. Who would have ever thought that long life, do you ever think that some people who die young, they die from drug overdose, they die from doing things or speeding in a car or hitting a pole, do you ever think that some of that might actually be tied in with the choice to dishonor their parents? The choice to do what mothers and fathers and guardians have a specific care in their heart for you.

They can see things that you can't see. They've had the experience that you've not had. You know, as long as you're under their roof and their care, the scripture says you should obey your parents in the Lord.

That means accept, unless that they are asking you to do something. I know a young man who on his 15th birthday, his father brought him a prostitute to celebrate his manhood. Now this would be a case, of course, where you just simply are absolutely justified to disobey and to say, no, I'm not going in that direction.

That's one illustration of that. You know, forcing you into relationships with people who don't know Christ when the scripture says don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers. When the time comes that you're potentially able to marry, let it happen naturally.

Be content to know a lot of people of the opposite sex and just on a friendship basis. Don't panic. There's lots of people in the world.

Six billion people and it's increasing all the time. Be content to know, be content to be in a group, be content to have friends of the opposite sex. You don't have to be just hanging off of everybody as if your life is going to end tomorrow or you're so desperate for a relationship.

You see, the basis of all true and lasting intimacy in marriage is friendship and a lot of people don't realize that. That's where intimacy comes from. It's from communication and friendship.

Both before and after love has become part of this equation. Now sadly, many marriages break down because people marry others whom they think they love but don't really know them well enough to like them. It's amazing.

A lot of people know more about a used car than the person they're about to marry. They do these internet searches on previous ownership and all this stuff and even go so far as to call the other owners and what kind of a car was it and does it run well and yet they meet a person that they hardly know and then suddenly want to marry them. We've had that happen here in this church.

We've had people actually refuse counseling when we've tried to say, slow down, you don't even know this person. You're talking about somebody you're going to spend the rest of your life with if, I assume, that's what you intend to do when you make that vow before God. You're making a vow before God for in sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, that this person and I are becoming one before God and we're making a vow to one another and quite often in marriage counseling I have reminded people when they've said, well, you know, we've been together all of eight months and we're incompatible.

We've decided, and this is in the church, we've decided to break up. Your husband or wife must be your best friend above everything. The lasting marriages that I have known, people have been friends before they were lovers.

They got to like each other before they got to love each other because true love comes from communication, comes from knowing one another, comes from taking time to get to know one another, comes from taking time to talk. You see, because his muscles are going to turn to mush, I'm afraid, as good as he looks. And her curves will have a tendency to supersize once she's had a couple of kids and a hundred bags of Doritos.

And so you have to be friends. If your attraction is just physical, it's not going to last. You have to know the person.

You don't just marry somebody because they look good. You're talking about a life partner, so take time to get to know the person that you might one day marry. Now let it evolve naturally.

Don't get weird in the body of Jesus Christ. I had a guy come into my office one time, and this is probably 16 years ago, I was here a couple of years, and he comes into my office, and he's all fidgety and worried, and he sits down for counseling. He says, he's probably, I forget, maybe in his late 20s, and he said, I'm thinking of getting married.

I said, well, that's a good thing. And he says, I think I may have found the one. The one.

I'd never heard that before. The one. As if God drops a needle from heaven into a haystack, and says, wow, it's going to be fun watching John find this, you know.

And so I just, I'd never heard this before, so I said to him, do you love this girl? He said, no. I said, well, she's not the one. And I said, because in the Bible it says, husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church.

I said, have you ever read the Song of Solomon? Have you ever seen the passion of God, of Christ for his bride? Have you ever understood when he said, just one of your eyes has captivated my heart? I feel lonely when you're not there. I'm totally, how do you think Christ loves you? How do you feel about the love of Jesus? Do you think he went to the cross, out of some legal obligation to redeem you, or do you realize tonight that he passionately loves you? I said, listen, Jesus would, our marriages are supposed to be a type to the world of Christ and his church. He's not going to ask you to marry somebody you don't

love.

He said, oh, thank God. The poor guy was under this illusion that if this was the one, that it was, even though he didn't even really like her, that it would, he'd be disobeying God. So it's almost like marriage and martyrdom went together.

I don't quite understand what he was thinking about. It's God's design, marriage. It's God's design.

You love somebody when the thought of living without them is worse than the thought of living with them. Don't get weird, it scares people. You want to destroy any chance, sir, of having this girl even consider you, if you are attracted to her, take her out for lunch and say, hello, my name is John.

The Lord told me you're to be my wife. Let that be the first thing out of your mouth. And if you do that, I suggest you know the Heimlich maneuver because she's going to choke on her sandwich.

Don't be weird. You weren't weird, most of you. Most of you weren't weird before you got saved.

Don't get weird now. It should be natural. You're in a group this size, you start associating with various events and there's a lot of people.

A lot of them are your friends, both sexes, and suddenly you see a girl, you see a guy, you start to be attracted to that person and you feel that there might be some potential here. Like I said, you weren't strange about it before, don't get strange about it now. And don't give in to partner panic.

Partner panic. New York City. Most everybody that's come here, at least not from the city, you were career-oriented.

You might have come from a town where everybody in your high school got married at 19, had four kids by the time they're 24, and you said, that's just not for me. So you came to New York and you got into your career and your career has gone so far, now you're in your 30s, late 20s. You shouldn't be here if you're over 30, by the way, tonight.

And you get into partner panic. It's like, hey, it's getting late here. You know, if I'm going to get married, and you start doing the math, there's only X number of years left and I don't even know anybody yet.

And so you start panicking. One person said to me, he said, it's just impossible to have a relationship here. Every time I, every time, this was a guy, every time I go to lunch, I mean, with a girl, we're sitting across the table and she wants a ring, a mortgage, three kids in a two-car garage before dessert comes.

Partner panic. It's like one of those B-grade space movies where the space alien attaches itself to you and you're running around saying, get it off, get it off. Don't panic.

And don't missionary date either. I just know John's going to give his life to the Lord one day. I know what the Bible says, but you see, I have this inner knowledge.

Well, I've seen that inner knowledge not play out the way people thought it was going to before. Suddenly they have children. One wants to go to church, the other doesn't.

And what a disaster it becomes. If you find somebody that you think might be a potential life partner for you, a wife or a husband, and let's say you just decide to ask that person out, and I'm talking to young

adults now, and you decide to ask that person out for coffee or for dinner. There's nothing wrong with that.

Just keep it honest. Keep it open. Keep it clean.

Let your evening end at her apartment door and go home. Keep it clean, folks. Keep it clean.

But you've heard this term, don't defraud another person. And that simply means don't keep them hanging on to your arm just because you're lonely and nobody else has come along. When you've come to the point of understanding that, listen, there's nothing lasting here, don't let the other person believe there is.

For the sake of truth, and for the sake, as Paul said, of caring about the feelings of the other person, be honest and just let them know. Don't keep somebody hanging on your arm for eight months or a year just because it looks good. It satisfies the fact that you're lonely and you're waiting for someone else, and you're defrauding in a sense.

You're perpetrating a fraud because there's no chance that that relationship is going to go anywhere. So for the sake of loving other people, let that relationship go. Now when you feel that you're moving towards marriage, the temptation to move towards all stages of sexual intimacy is going to be very, very strong.

From inappropriate kissing to touching to every other stage in between that and ending in sexual intercourse, this is a temptation you're going to have to fight, especially in this generation. And it's a terrible trap. You think there's nothing harmful about this, but let me tell you that giving in to premarital sex in all of its forms, I'm not talking just about intercourse, but in all of its forms, can destroy the very foundation or the glue that holds marriage together.

Let me explain this to you. Now God designed marriage and He put a DNA in men and a DNA in women. And He knows what makes marriage work and He knows what will cause it to break down.

In Ephesians 5, He says, Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself.

Husbands, He says, love your wives as Christ loves the church and gave Himself. In other words, your motives, what you do is to give yourself to her and present her pure before God. And on the part of the wife, at the end of this chapter 5 of Ephesians, Paul says, let everyone love his wife as himself.

And the wife see that she reverence, or that means respect her husband. So it's in the heart of a wife to be cherished by her husband or her potential husband, to be guarded, to be protected, to be brought under his wing, to be guided, to be presented as it is pure before God. And it's in the heart of the husband to be respected.

God put that in every man. If you're an honest man today, you know that that's in your heart. You want to be respected in your home.

But the moment that you take advantage of her, sir, you have lost her respect. And you may never fully get it back without a miracle from God. How do you say, I am loving you as Christ loves the church when you have used her for your own pleasure? And that's the bottom line.

Don't even try to tell me there's any love involved in this. You've simply used her. You've submitted to lust.

And you've taken that precious gift that God has given to you, and you've used it to your own advantage. Unwittingly undergirding and destroying the very foundation of your home. Like a man I shared one time who goes out to rob in a neighborhood, and the power goes out, and he ends up breaking into his own house.

Runs down the street with his own stereo under his arms saying, what a night this has been. When you take advantage of one another. And this goes two ways.

I know this is not a one-way street. But what is lost is that she will no longer reverence you, and he honestly no longer loves you as Christ loves the church. Then you go to an altar, and you proclaim these sweet vows before God, but there's been this destruction of the foundation.

All under the guise of love. All under the guise of what a wonderful evening that was, or has continued to be. And I read a survey that shocked me recently that told me that 80% of evangelical youth in this generation, in church, are involved in premarital sex now.

If you have, if you are, this is the time, my friend, to get down on one knee before you ever think of giving that ring. You get down on one knee, and you honestly ask her forgiveness. And you, ma'am, get down on one knee yourself and ask for his forgiveness for yielding or for being part of the problem or for not creating the barriers that should be in these relationships because if you have a chance at a lasting marriage, these foundations must be rebuilt.

Keep it honest. Keep it open. Don't do things in secret.

Don't hide. Don't lie. Be real.

Watch what you set before your eyes because it will determine your value system. I had a young lady one time come to me. She said, I went to his house, and we sat on the couch, and she said, there was nothing in me that ever thought what was about to happen was going to happen.

She was so filled with shame. She was so filled with regret. Something happened in this relationship that they actually started, I believe, to resent one another.

And she said, we sat down just to watch a movie, but you have to watch out what you watch now because there's some wonderful romantic stories out there that have these bedroom scenes in them, and if you're not careful, it just portrays evil as good. Whatever direction you're looking in, that's the direction you're going to go. Whatever you're focusing on, it's going to create a breakdown of barriers and a desensitizing to these things.

And suddenly, what you know instinctively is wrong becomes right because the movie industry portrays it as desirable and wonderful and glorious and ending in this euphoric love when in reality, it's destroying the very foundation. Look at the marriages of those who are making the movies. I was at a supermarket checkout one time and there were two ladies ahead of me and all the magazines of the movie stars were there and this one lady turned to the other and she said, thank you, Jesus.

I thought she might be like Chris. She said, thank you, Jesus. I was bored ugly.

She said, look at the mess my life could be. Watch what you set before your eyes. This is what is really ruining this generation.

It's media. It's unrestrained media. It's movies that are just so nice but they're not so nice.

Even if the segments are just little snippets or little glances of what looks to be a sex scene or a bedroom scene, you're setting it before your eyes and unwittingly agreeing with it that this is good. Wondering why, as this girl did, why did I end up in that place before the movie was finished? What was sown in the heart to take an innocent sitting down, which I believe it began. I believed her, it began innocent but it didn't end that way.

I want to tell you why we will never have, as long as I pastor here, a singles ministry at Times Square Church. Number one, and first and foremost, for your protection. In this kind of an environment, especially in urban New York City, especially with so many people panicking in their 30s now, you guys and girls are like a tourist boat that has just sunk and a shark has come upon everybody floating in the water, desperately trying to get to one another for one last chance at life and happiness before everything goes down.

I want to talk to you about sharks and harlots. There are men in this church that are sharks. Some of them get to a few people before we have the opportunity to throw them out of here.

And there are harlots, as the scripture says, who come in and they hunt for the precious soul. Not everybody in the church is a Christian. Corrie Tenboom, a great saint of old, her father said, just because a mouse lives in the cookie jar doesn't make him a cookie.

Sharks circle the body and generally hang out in the lobby or the mezzanine. And they are spiritual to the core. But you will never find them building houses in Mexico or feeding hungry kids in Africa because they simply don't do that.

They're not here for that reason. They're here because they become aware that there's a lot of young people that are desperate for a husband or a wife and it just becomes easy pickings. And, of course, these are kind of the nicer crowd as they see it.

And I'm speaking from knowledge. I know this goes on and I've had to deal with it. That's why you need to get involved and go on a missions trip.

You see, there you'll find young people your age that really do love God, that really do want to serve God. You need to get involved in feeding the poor. Sharks don't go there.

I know that for a fact. And if they do, they can't last more than a week or two. They're not interested in it in the least.

They're interested in something else. If you want to get picked off, hang around the lobby in the mezzanine. If you want to find somebody that loves God, go to the mission field.

Take a missions trip. Get involved in ministry. That's a place where you will be protected.

I'm not interested in seeing one more young person in this church get picked off by somebody who's just an absolute spiritual fraud. We can't bar them from coming in here, but we can make it very difficult for them to operate now, can't we? Jesus said, Seek first the kingdom of God. Seek first the kingdom of God

and His righteousness.

That means the cleanness that He's given you, the new life He's promised, the new mind, the new heart, the new spirit. Seek first His kingdom and this new life in Christ and all these things will be added to you. The deepest desires of your heart will be fulfilled.

God will lead you to a place where you will find somebody that will be a wonderful asset to your life and you'll be a wonderful asset to that person's life and you will marry and have children and raise them in a home where there's stability and joy and direction in life. You have that promise from the word of God. Now I know there's a gift to singleness that not too many here are aspiring to get.

Sort of like the grim reaper showing up at your door. It's the gift of singleness. But the gift of singleness is given to people who want to stay single.

It's not a gift that's imposed necessarily on you. There's a desire. Paul said, I wish that everybody could be like I am.

Well he didn't really want to get married. It was his desire and God gave him the gift to remain single and not be sexually obsessed. That was the bottom line.

That's why Paul said, I wish you could be as I am but if you are unable, if you're not given this gift to be single, then it's better to marry than to burn. And actually the context is to burn with passion all of the time. Paul was a realist and I thank God for that with all of my heart.

Seek first the kingdom of God. Seek first the kingdom in everything you do, in how you live. And the Lord is well able to add to your life the person that he has for you.

I know what I'm speaking about. I've seen too many people who have not sought first the kingdom of God but they've sought first a husband or a wife. And what a disaster that is.

I had a guy in my office said, oh I'm getting divorced. This is not the one. I was back to this the one thing.

This is not the one. I made a mistake and so God won't leave me in this relationship and that was in this church folks because this is not the one. I said well, mister I got news for you.

I said you stood before God and you made a vow. And the moment you made that vow whether or not the math is correct in your mind that was the one for you. And because now you have to work out some of the things that you should have talked about you should have learned about you should have known about before you hit the altar that does not get you off the hook.

You made this bed now you lie in this bed. And you know when you marry somebody that was a Christian let's say and went to an altar and took off when things got tough and now are making sweet promises to you what makes you think they're going to be any more dedicated to you than the first person? No, only till times get tough. Then you'd be another one in the string of failures.

No sir, you better know who you're marrying. I speak to you as a father. I speak to you as a grandfather.

I speak to you as somebody who cares. Be careful in this because this is next to your salvation this is the greatest decision that you will make on the earth. This is the longest commitment you will ever make to any person besides Christ is your husband or your wife.

And when you've made that decision you've stood before God if you have an ounce of the fear of God in your heart you've stood before God and you've made a vow before God. Those words can never be taken lightly that's why the scripture says conclusively what God has joined together I don't care who writes what law but no man has the right to put it asunder. I have never seen ever one time people who have abandoned their commitment to their spouse or husband without justifiable reason which would be fornication willful abandonment or adultery.

I've never ever seen somebody happy who simply just walked away because it became inconvenient. Not one time. And I've been around now for enough years to see.

But I have seen people who have made the choice to work it through to walk it through to know who it is they're marrying to know the commitment they're making when they get to an altar and to say no matter what if it is in sickness or in health if it is for better or if this is a worse moment I'm making this commitment before God and I'm going to hold to it until the day I die. Those are the people whose marriages are strong those are the people who are the bedrock of a society that functions and children who have mothers and fathers in their homes. And many of you have been the victims of pain because people who went to an altar if they even did in your case didn't hold to their vows and you know what it feels like as a child to experience the pain of that kind of abandonment.

But today we have an opportunity as Christians to say the chain breaks here I am not going to an altar as a fraud I'm not going as a fake I'm not going half-heartedly I'm not going with hidden and disguised sin and motives in my life I'm not going with any bridge in my mind to ever build a way out of this I'm going there I'm going to do it right my children are going to have a father my grandchildren are going to have a grandfather my wife or my husband is going to have a partner. I'm not walking out. I had a friend in Canada he's dead now both him and his wife but he he got married and on his honeymoon found out his wife had multiple sclerosis and she became paralyzed shortly after their honeymoon and could only move partially one hand and her neck and for the next fifty to sixty years he carried her.

It was a love story. And I got him to speak one time on a marriage seminar in the church and he got up and he he was I think a Hungarian man he just said it very simply he said if you're going to have a rose garden there have to be thorns.

And he had a he had a little there was like a little it's like a chaise lounge that you lay out in the sun it has wheels on one end you know those what those look like and his wife would lay down on face down on the cart and he would roll her around the church and with her one hand that worked fairly well she would plant flowers and to this day those flowers still come up around that church they're long gone into heaven but to this day the beauty of that relationship is still bearing fruit in the earth of people who went to an altar and made a commitment and they were real Christians and they worked it through I've seen too many people now over the years take the easy way out thinking it is the easy way and it's not it's just compounding the pain and making the road more difficult and

I've seen others who have just said no we made a vow even those who made the mistake of marrying before they really knew who they were marrying and after found out that there were difficulties they weren't prepared to embrace but they said no we made a vow and those who made the choice to do that they break through it's like dawn comes at the end of a dark night and they break through and suddenly they really do love each other because I believe with God all things are possible I believe it with everything that's inside my heart my own marriage went through some rough waters before we got saved I was a very

selfish man but today I would need the grace of God to survive if my wife died before I do it would only be God's grace that would keep me because we became one when we came to Christ

I got into this Bible and I said God I'm going to do it your way and God forgive me for not doing it your way for so long even though some of those years I wasn't saved forgive me for the ignorance of what I did and I didn't cherish what you'd given me my wife paid me a supreme compliment a couple of a week ago we were on holidays together and one day we were just sitting there and she just kind of tucked under my arm and she said you know I feel so safe with you we couldn't have said that 35 years ago but we can today seek first the kingdom of God I can see here tonight that there could be some phenomenal marriages wonderful wonderful relationships in this church that would go on and be lasting and bear much good and much fruit in the earth I can see and hear children singing in your

homes and if if the Lord carries holidays that to you are pain but to your children won't be and to your grandchildren won't be when they gather because grandma and grandpa stayed together they worked it through and they found life and grace in Jesus Christ actually that's the bedrock of stability in any society that's why the devil is so after marriage in our generation because if he gets married he's got the country he's got the society if he breaks it up it's just a hodgepodge of pain ridden people that are really easy to get into the streets rioting and so he's after the family but by God's grace in this church he's not going to get it by God's grace we're going to do it right by God's grace I believe that with all my heart we're going to walk it his way we're going to walk cleanly

honestly knowing there's a great reward for this to the Christian a wonderful reward if I do it right God promises it will greatly fulfill me it will bring something into my life there was a time in my early marriage Pastor Teresa that I I wished I hadn't married her I'll be honest and it wasn't her fault it was mine and it was just the short season before we came to Christ I was utterly selfish I hated the thought of being tied down and now I've come to the place my life and I've said to her recently do you think I know there's no marriage in heaven but do you think do you think we could just ask maybe God makes an exception or maybe maybe we'll be one person because they do they're too good to become one maybe we'll be Turkar and we won't be two people up there because I can't fathom

the thought of living without her even in heaven well it's the truth it's the truth it's the truth and that's marriage it's what marriage is about that's what marriage is like it's what marriage feels like it's what it looks like it's what it should be it's what it can be but you have to do it God's way there are no shortcuts to a stable marriage you cannot take a curvy road to the altar and expect that you're going to know the full blessing of God and if you have made mistakes I do thank God that we serve the God of the second the third and the fourth chance I thank God with all of my heart for this that you can come to an altar and say Lord starting today I'm going to do it right I'm just going to do it right I'm going to do it God's way I thank the Lord Jesus Christ that he restores

what we foolishly gave away and he gives back what the moth and cakeworm have eaten the scripture says and he can give us back a sense of purity if we've lost it or a sense of integrity if we've compromised it he can restore it that's the beauty of God but he requires of us honesty he requires a determination to be to live right and to do right and the end result is a blessing like he says in Malachi he says bring this bring what you have into the house of God and see if I'll not open heaven and pour out a blessing that you can't contain something that's deeper than you could produce and it's more powerful and pure than anything you could try to manipulate into existence God says you do it my way and I will show you what I can do this is a grandfather's message tonight because I'm going

to be speaking this to my grandchildren now as they start to grow things I've learned in Christ I've walked through I've experienced I've known it and I have tasted of it and I want you to taste it I want you to taste and see that marriage is good that God is willing to lead you to the person that will bring this delight into your heart if you are willing to serve him and seek him it will just happen she'll just walk into the room one day all your circling the block will have been in vain all the worship that goes like this will be for nothing all the hoping the preacher's going to say turn to the person on your right and left and say I love you with the love of the Lord and it's the one service he does and do it and you're so desperate to be able to say something and all of that will

fade away the moment he or she walks into the room and the two of you will meet and you will know it's an amazing thing when that happens you know nobody tells you you just know now remember don't get weird at that time play it cool just play it cool Father I thank you for tonight Lord I thank you for this wonderful young people in this church young adults Lord thank you Jesus for helping us to be normal and to love you and to trust you and to do right Jesus thank you for that thank you Lord now I pray tonight for healing for those who've made mistakes they've lost their purity and integrity gotten into practices they shouldn't have done things that they deeply regret but you restore and you heal and you give us another chance to do it right with the promise of the full blessing as if we

had never failed Lord would you help us to have the sense to make this choice would you give us the strength in Jesus name now we're gonna worship for a moment and I'd like to give an altar call tonight for anybody here who just says pastor you've spoken to my heart and it doesn't mean that you've failed it just means that tonight that you're making a choice and saying God I want to do this your way I don't want to fall into a trap and I don't want my loneliness to guide me I don't want my desperation to lead me I want to serve you and I trust you Lord I trust you with all my heart Jesus that you will give me that which I need and it will be a delight to my heart and we're gonna stand and if that's you I want you to slip out of your seat and we're gonna pray I'm gonna pray for you tonight

that God give you the grace Lord tonight we just thank you for your word we thank you that you've spoken to our hearts and God we come before you first of all asking God that you would cleanse us your word says if we confess our sins where we've fallen short where we've messed up where we've done things wrong that you're faithful to forgive us and not only to forgive us but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and so we lift our hands to you tonight and ask that you would cleanse us tonight Lord of every action every wrong behavior every habit that we've developed that's un-Christ like God we thank you for your cleansing tonight Holy Spirit change us make us into the people you want us to be we ask Lord God that you'd bring healing tonight to those areas of our lives where we've been

wounded where we've been hurt where we've been taken advantage of and where we've been manipulated and Lord we pray for those that we have manipulated and those that we have seduced and those that we have defrauded and God tonight we ask that you would help them as well and heal them as well tonight Father we ask that you would deliver us from being spooky and weird when it comes to relationships help us to be anointed and normal Hallelujah help us Lord Jesus not to complicate this thing God we love you tonight and we not only love you but we thank you for this wonderful family you've given us we thank you for this wonderful body of believers that you've placed us in and we thank you Lord that you're gonna order our steps now God I pray as a youth pastor in this church that you would

cause healthy friendships healthy relationships to bud and healthy marriages to be the result keep us keep us free Lord from wolves Lord and give us discernment expose Lord everything that's unlike you and God

we just thank you for this we honor you thank you for loving us so God that you would speak so tenderly through us to us we thank you for our pastor we thank you for Pastor Carter and God we thank you for all that you've brought him through God we thank you for his example and God we've heard what you've spoken tonight and we ask that it would go deep in our gut Lord and cause it to bear fruit a hundredfold Lord we thank you and we honor you tonight be glorified every unhealthy soul tie that's here tonight every unhealthy soul tie unhealthy relationships dependencies Lord

codependencies that are not what you've ordained for us Lord help us to depend and trust in you and Lord help healthy again relationships to bud and to develop God we honor you we make a choice to do things your way hallelujah tell him that tonight I make a choice God to do things your way have your way as we've sung tonight Holy Spirit fill me enable me to glorify your name even in this area and God we trust you and we bless you in advance for what you're going to do in Jesus name and all God's people said Amen Hallelujah

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