

Courtship Questions & Answers

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston emphasizes the importance of establishing a solid foundation in courtship and managing emotions through parental guidance and spiritual discernment.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Timothy 5:1

Topics: "Christian Courtship", "Marriage Preparation"

Description

Denny Kenaston preaches about the importance of laying a right foundation before entering into marriage to avoid unhappy marriages and divorce. He emphasizes the need for young women to be shame-faced, avoiding boldness in interactions with men, and for young men to guard their emotions and not let them stir improperly. Kenaston advises seeking wisdom from fathers or spiritual authorities in courtship decisions, emphasizing the importance of purity, discernment, and seeking God's will in relationships.

Transcript

For Women

Right courtship, right emotions, wrong courtship, wrong emotions. As I was meditating upon this, I was thinking, "This is the answer to the divorce problem in America,". We don't need a standard that divorce is wrong, that is not what is wrong in America. The thing that is wrong in America is that all of the marriages are starting out wrong, and when you start them out wrong, they don't go right. And out of a position of unhappy marriages, even God's people are wiggling their way around those scriptures to find a good way that they can get out of their unhappy marriage and get another one. But the answer is to lay a right foundation before you even enter into marriage. And then with happy marriages, you won't need a law that says "no divorce". No happy, married couple ever even thought about the word "divorce". I believe that this is the answer: That God give you girls the wisdom to lay the right foundation. At this time, we're going to open it up for questions, and I'll field the questions, and by God's grace, try to answer them.

Q: What do you do when you're just looking around the room, and you find a young man's eyes looking your way?

A: Here's the answer. The Bible teaches that young ladies, and women, should be shame-faced. That word "shame-faced" means "blush-faced", that there's not a boldness in you to look in the eyes of a man. "Shame-facedness", I'm not sure how to say it, [is where] the head and the eyes look down. A young lady that's shame-faced, you can look at her and look into her eyes, and she will look at your eyes, and it's right

when you're talking to men to look at their eyes, but the shame-facedness [is where] the eyes look down, and they may look up again, and then they'll look down, and they don't spend a long time gazing. That's what "shame-facedness" is. That's God's will for every woman, married, single, or not, that she doesn't feel bold around men to look them in the eyes and talk to them, and focus a long time on their eyes. But a shame-faced girl puts her head down and her eyes down. It may seem a little odd to you at first, but once you learn the spirit of shame-facedness, it will come very naturally.

If that young man is looking across the room like that, and he is wanting to stir your emotions, he is not moving in proper authority. You should look away, and really, if you find him doing that a couple of times, you need to go talk to your papa, and ask your papa to take care of it, and girls, I truly believe, that if we will do this, if you will practice some of this, it will eliminate the whole nonsense game that goes on between young men and young ladies. The young men will learn, "Hey, you don't get away with that around here. Fathers will come and talk to you if you get out of line," and that's the way it should be. And as soon as that happens a little bit, it will all get in its place, and then you will be free.

Q: If you find a young man looking at you, what do you do with your emotions?

A: You keep your emotions. The word "keep" means to watch guard over them. You do not let them go, and that is a choice that you must make, and that you can make. In fact, you can get to the place where you are dead to all of those looks, and it doesn't stir you, and make your heart flutter, and if your heart flutters when you find a young man looking your way, you need to crucify that heart that is fluttering.

Q: What do you do if you have affection in your heart, and you are in a church fellowship meeting or a public meeting somewhere, and you meet the young man that you have affections for, and you can feel your heart rising up as you shake his hand?

A: I think I would, number one, deal with my heart about it, especially if it's unlawful emotions, emotions that are out of order before courtship. I would deal with my heart about it, and then put the whole issue on the shelf, just like David said in his testimony. He had to put it on the shelf several times. But the second thing that you can do, if you find your heart moving in that direction, and you are in the process of dealing with it. I'd probably shake some other hands, and not that hand, until I got it squared away in my own heart.

Q: What if we put away these things, and we have a spiritual fellowship in our young group, and we're busy doing the work of God together, and maybe a girl has a spiritual attraction?

A: That is right. There's nothing wrong with the fellowship of a brother and a sister, where there is a drawing together, there. But then, if the young man, he misinterprets that in another direction, and he thinks what was a spiritual fellowship with him, he thinks it's an emotional fellowship, again, you need your father to protect you in that. I believe that's the answer to that question.

Q: If a woman is having a struggle with her emotions toward him, she knows it's not right, but she still has to relate to him, what does she do in a situation like that?

A: I would not spend a lot of time around him. I would make my relating with him as little as possible, that's the first thing.

Number two, I'd get real serious with God, and I would take that to my mom and dad, and ask them to pray with me about it, so that I could overcome it, because it's a very uncomfortable situation. You're going to

seem almost cold towards him because of the struggle that you are going through, and you want to overcome that struggle so that you can be free again.

Q: How does a young man go about working through the process of courtship when a young lady doesn't have a father?

A: That's a good question. If you have no father, and a young man can't clearly see that there's some other older, wise man that's kind of watching over her life, then the next authority would be her preacher, and that's where he would go. And then the pastor may say different things. He may say, "Ok, we're ready to enter into a courtship here," and the pastor may call on an older brother and his family in the church family, and give them the responsibility of overseeing your courtship. We've done that a couple of times. It has worked out beautifully, as long as the young lady can come under the authority of the one that is watching over the courtship.

Q: What can you do if you are in such a group setting that if you shake someone's hand, that it's totally misunderstood? Do you just avoid them altogether?

A: I guess my council would be "yes". Pretty much, I would stay away from that whole situation because of the youth group setting that you are in, That will keep you free from all the pressures of that which can really distort your own working through the matter in your heart. It can really distort it, and I would just stay away from the situation as much as possible.

And I want to say this, too. This kind of answers a few different questions. There's nothing wrong with a young lady having a little bit of a coldness with a young man if you can sense that someone is not interpreting you rightly. There's nothing wrong with him receiving a little bit of coldness. And if even if he struggles with it a little bit, it's his own fault if he struggles with it. He's supposed to be in his place, and he's out of his place, so I feel that its right for you to be a little aloof and cold towards them if they are moving in directions that they shouldn't.

Q: What do you do if you are a young lady and you have a father that does not understand courtship, and you are ready to enter into a courtship relationship?

A: My suggestion is that you will find somebody else that who will watch over your courtship. That would be my suggestion. They are usually unchurched if they don't understand anything at all about courtship. You can just find somebody in the church who will them come in, again like the other question we answered, and oversee your courtship. I like that term: "Oversee your courtship". Just [to] see you through that process. And there are many couples that would be delighted to do that, and they would come in there and take the place of father and mother, and carry you through it and keep you accountable, and their hearts will be thrilled as they see you come up to the marriage altar.

Q: What do you do if you don't have a father and find yourself in an uncomfortable situation with a young man, like he's looking your way, or you can sense that his emotions are being drawn your way?

A: You don't have a father? You find a papa. You find a man who will do that for you, and if you can't find one, you go to your preacher, and the preacher will be delighted to take care of it. Either one, you can find a papa who will do it, or you can go to your spiritual authority in the church, and they will be glad to do it for you

Q: What is appropriate, and how long should you talk to a young man? And how do you know what you should talk about, and not talk about?

A: That's a little difficult to answer in a short question-and-answer, but basically, you have to go by all the teachings that have been put into your heart and your life through the years. And also, you must go by discernment. You know in your own heart, how long as your visiting with a young man [it will be] before things will start to feel uncomfortable. God's spirit is very jealous over you, and he will also begin to prompt your heart that this is going on too long.

Q: How long do you sit and talk to a young man? Is it appropriate to sit and talk to a man for fifteen minutes? Thirty minutes?

A: Personally, I feel like that's getting a little long, to be sitting down for a long session, just privately you and a young man. I think that longer conversations are better in a group, maybe your family and another family gets together, and you are sitting around and you are visiting. There, conversations can go for a much longer time. But just two to sit down and spend a half hour visiting, I feel like that might not work out too well.

Q: How do I respond when a young man innocently wants my picture, or wants to talk to me, and I am not comfortable about him coming my way, but still, you can tell that he's innocent in it.

A: If it's out of order, you should still ask an authority to help you with that, and let it be a time of instruction for him. I don't believe it will stir up thoughts in his mind, but rather it will instruct him and help him to realize, "That wasn't quite right." And, let's face it: We all have some learning to do in that, the girls do, and the boys do also, in what is appropriate, and what is not. Some of that can be learned whether someone is drawing away emotionally or not.

"I'm sorry, George, but my father doesn't allow me to give pictures away". That's a good answer, and it's true. And maybe we should bring it out here. If you girls have a father or a spiritual leader over you, you have such a place of protection. You can blame it all on dad [laughs], just give it to dad, and the dads are very willing to carry that. When you defer it over to your father, it's like running underneath this umbrella to hide. And anything you don't want, "Hey, dad will take care of it". You mention dad, and that takes care of it, and it should, and that's your protection. Use it.

Q: When David was sharing his experiences in courtship and marriage, he said that for a long time, he had a special feeling, sensing, in his heart that Melinda was the young lady that he felt God wanted him to marry. He wasn't positive, it wasn't that he had no question at all, but there was that little sensing there that "this may be my wife". Is that ok?

A: As long as you know how to put it on the shelf. When I go to Africa, I put my wife on the shelf. That's a term that I use, but that's for real. If I didn't put it on the shelf, I'd be miserable the whole time I'm there, longing for her, wishing I could see her, and all of those things. But I just put it on the shelf. And any of those kind of senseings that you may have, you can just put it on the shelf and leave it there. And it may fall off the shelf and leave it there, but by the grace of God, you just put it back on the shelf. That's what David did. And it came off the shelf a few times, and he just put it back on the shelf, and forgot about it. That's what I do in my life. I couldn't make it in Africa if I didn't. And about two days before I'm ready to come back home, I take her off the shelf, and everybody knows it [laughs]. Those of you who were in Africa know what I'm talking about. I let my emotions go: "I'm going home! I'm going to see my wife!", and

that's exactly what you need to do. The same thing.

If you do have that sensing in your heart, don't go sharing it with anyone, like your best girlfriend who promised "she would never tell" [laughs], because they tell. And besides that, you shouldn't do it anyway. That's not leaving the issue on the shelf. So many girls have been hurt, mixed up, wounded, and confused, because they shared those intimate thoughts with their best girlfriend and before they knew it, it was moving around the rest of the group. And that's an unloving and an unkind thing to do. It does happen. But the best thing to do is take a mature position on the whole thing, and leave it on the shelf, in your heart, and leave it before the Lord, and go on and serve the Lord, and in God's good time, everything will work out.

I want to say a little bit about that concerning Melinda. Melinda had this sensing, and in the meantime, God sent her here to be a schoolteacher. I don't know, it must have been two or three times, other ladies came up to her, and shared with her, how much they appreciated David, and how they felt like David was going to be their husband, and she endured all of that, and she swallowed all of that. She had to take that and put it on the shelf, and rest in God, and say, "God, if this is your will, it's all going to work out, and all of these things will fall to naught. And in God's good time, when David woke up, he rung her door right away. It's a test of faith and trust in God, to leave it up to God.

But let's consider what the girls did to her. They should have never been sharing with her. It hurt her. She cried herself to sleep as she pondered that thing. It should have never been shared. It should have been on the shelf in their heart. Share it with mom and dad.

On this subject, Viola said "Talking never helps the emotions to go down", and that is well said. You may think you're going to get rid of it by talking about it, but all you are doing is blowing on the fire. You know how you get a fire going by blowing on it? You're just blowing on the fire, and some girls will sit up until three o'clock in the morning with their girlfriends, blowing on the fire, all the while saying, "I'm trying to put the fire out! I'm trying to put the fire out!". You're blowing on the fire, and it's flaming up... unless it's the mom and dad. You won't be fanning the fire unless it's with mom and dad, because mom and dad will be sitting there, and dad will have his furrowed eyebrows, and will say, "I see. Well, we'll be praying about this, and mom will be cautiously watching on". You won't be fanning any fire with your mom and dad. That's the best place to take it, to mom and dad. That's very good council.

Q: What to do if others are saying that there is a relationship beginning here, but you know that there isn't, and the young man doesn't even think about it, it's just a matter of visiting and fellowship?

A: Be free. That's what we're talking about. A spiritual fellowship among young people that you don't have to live under the binding pressures of your peers. And it may take a little bit of time before they realize that none of us are going to play this game anymore. And once you all can lay that game down, then you don't have to worry about that. But until you do, I feel that it's alright for some conversation back and forth. I wouldn't worry about it. If you have a spiritual fellowship, let it be a spiritual fellowship, and let the others do what they want with it. That would be my council.

Q: What do you do if another girl comes up to you and starts telling you about her boyfriend or whatever?

A: I have two answers to that question. Number one, if you're in a fellowship, where these principles are clearly believed and taught, you should just quietly admonish her, (I.E.) "I don't think we should be talking about this".

But if you're not in this kind of a fellowship, you'd better just listen to her, and be kind to her, and hope and trust that maybe you can get an open door and admonish her that it's not a good thing for her to talk about it. But you can't just say, "Oh, I don't talk about things like that,". She's living up to the light she has, and she feels free to talk about it. You have to love her and allow her a little bit of room. But I would say this, If she's spending the night at your house and an hour in conversation about it, then you just have to humbly tell her that, "My father really doesn't like for me to talk about things like this," and just run right underneath that covering again, and stay there under the protection of your father. And let her go away thinking, "Boy, her father sure is a hard fellow to live with", instead of thinking, "She doesn't care! She's insensitive!". She can let it fall on your dad, he's got big shoulders.

Q: What if you sense God's direction for a certain young man, and he moves away, and goes to another place (out of sight is out of mind). And then you begin to have those impressions?

A: Do like Mary. Just hide those impressions in your heart, and then, when it's time, and maybe he calls, and says, "I've talked to your father, and mother, and they've given me the freedom to ask you if we can enter into a relationship". Then, when you begin praying about it, you can go back there on that shelf, pull all of that back down, and look at it, and say, "Lord, is this God's will for me? I remember those impressions back then two years ago, I remembered them again when I saw him," and that will just be used to help you discern God's will for your life. That's the best way to handle that.

Q: What if you are totally asleep in Jesus, and you're not even thinking about marriage, and you are just lost of the love of God, and the service of God, and all of a sudden, a young man comes into your life, he's come to your father and mother, and now he's come to the point where father and mother brought it to you, and he's asking if he can begin to court you? What do you do? What is your response?

A: Well, because you are a young lady, it's time for you to go before the Lord and say, "Lord, what are you doing?", unless you have an overwhelming witness that you don't want to have anything to do with that, then you simply just say "no". But if you have an open heart about those things, then you just pray about it, and talk to your father and mother about it, and begin to say, "Well, Lord, are you waking me up?". See, with a young lady, that's how you'll all get woken up. With a young man, someone has to give them a little nudge here in there. Dad has to say, "Son, come on, now. I think you need to be praying about marriage. But with you girls, that is how you will get woke up, every one of you. And I trust that by God's grace, you can be asleep until someone wakes you up.

Q: We've come up to the point of the process of courtship where the question has been laid on me. It has gone through my authorities and now it's to me. Is there any way I can be sure in discerning what God's will is?

A: I would just give George Muler's four point outline in discerning the will of God. Number one: "What is the Spirit of God saying in my own heart?", number two: "What are the circumstances saying?", number three: "What are my authorities saying?", and number four: "What does the word of God say?". Those are the four things that George Muler used in all of his decisions that he had to make, and he had to make some big ones. "There's a big building for sale, here. It's a hundred thousand dollars. Lord, do you want us to buy this building? We don't have any money," and he discerned it with these four points right there. And if will follow those four points, you'll be able to come to a place in your heart where you are clear about it. If you get to a place where you are clear, and you find a place where you are struggling a little bit, it will make God's will to you really clear to you again. And I would encourage you girls, learn to pray and fast

concerning these things. The struggles with your emotions, pray and fast about it. God will give you victory over it when you come to the place where it's time to discern along with the others that are helping you to discern. Pray and fast about it. When you pray and fast, God brings you into a spiritual awareness. Your heart gets alert, you fine-tune your heart to hear the voice of God, and you'll be able to discern God's voice very clearly, and know, "This is the way. Walk ye in it,".

Q: How does a young man, or a young lady, evaluate the character of each other if they can't spend a lot of time talking together?

A: Well, for some of you, that may be difficult, because you are not in a fellowship. But where you are in a fellowship, it just happens very naturally, you know. The young people get together, and they go soul-winning, or they're on a bus going to New York City, and I'm just giving you a few of the examples of the interactions that are here among us. It doesn't take long. You know, you may be in there three, four years. You know the character of every young man in there. You can tell. Just this weekend, different things going on, you notice who was always standing there, talking to the teachers after the sessions were over, and you notice which boy went outside, running around and fooling. You had your eyes open to all of those things. That is the way that you evaluate the character, and it takes some time to do that.

But if you have some questions about the character of an individual, and he's already come, and he's come to your father and mother, and come asking, I don't think it's wrong to call his father up, and have a couple of conversations with him private, you know. If you're that far along into this whole matter, there's nothing wrong with calling the father and saying, "There's a few questions that I have about your son. Could you answer them for me? I'm trying to discern God's will concerning marriage,". I trust that the father will give you an honest answer, and then you can evaluate from there. But for the most part, you will be able to evaluate character because of the interaction at church, a youth meeting, a church-wide evangelistic meeting, [and] big meetings like this. There are many opportunities. Families get together, and there is fellowship there among families. All of those give you beautiful opportunities to evaluate character, and I would say to all of you, open your eyes. Learn to have a discerning eye, and evaluate character. And if you see that this boy is always the one that's punching around, and he's always the joker and all of that, then you take note of those things, that his character is not doing very well.

Q: What if young people are together, sitting around the table, maybe there's a debate, they're discussing a certain subject, a matter of scripture?

A: I think that's very good to have some conversation like that. That's what spiritual fellowship is. That's what us older ones do when we get together. We will sit together, and back and forth discuss this scripture, and that one, and we are sharing our hearts back and forth. That's the kind of spiritual fellowship that we're wanting you to have, and that's good. And again, those are beautiful opportunities to evaluate character.

Q: Is it proper for a young lady to start a conversation?

A: That's a good question, and the reason you're asking is because young men never do it [laughs]. And here's the answer to that. Really, it's twofold. I don't think it's wrong for a young lady to walk up to one of her brothers in the church and shake his hand and say, "Good morning, Brother John. How are you doing today?". I don't see that as being a problem to do that. You should feel free. However, on the boy's side, I think if we can lay this whole nonsense stuff down, the might feel a little freer. Boys are very self-conscious about this whole thing, and if everybody's watching and somebody's going to think that

so-and-so likes so-and-so, they'll just stay on the other side of the auditorium - they don't want to deal with it. I tell you, they've been scared away by all of this nonsense that goes on, so I just encourage all of you girls to put it away, so we can have a spiritual fellowship.

Q: What do you do when you have already let your emotions go, and you've suffered the hurts from it?

A: I'm sure at least a few of you girls have despaired when you heard the principles being taught because you realized that all of that has already happened somewhat in your life. Well, remember that God is a God that heals hurts and wounds, and he takes our failures, and can wash them away. I just want to encourage you to look to God, and allow God to continue to deal with it, and take the discipline of your failure and be sure that you don't go that way again, because you it will be easier for you to go that way again because you have already gone that way at one time. Take the discipline of the failure, the disappointment of the failure, and the hurt of it, and let that put an awareness in your heart to stay away from it next time.

Q: How do you know that you've sufficiently dealt with the hurt from an improper emotional relationship?

A: The only way you can tell is if you look at the person, and there's still hurt, you can be sure that the wound is not healed yet, and you need to go before God again, and let God go deeper, and deal with that until you can be free and not feel any hurt feelings toward that individual.

Comments from Denny Kenaston:

I appreciate all of your questions. I think we could do this for another hour, but because of time, I think that we'll dismiss the meeting. Thank you so much for your input. May God take this session and all of the other ones and just pour wisdom into each one of your hearts. My prayer for each one of you is that you will have a happy marriage because of the decision you've been making this week.

For Men

Our Father in heaven, Lord we thank you, God, for the opportunity to sit here together as men and discuss these very important subjects of godly courtship. Lord I pray for each one of these young men. Father, I pray that your grace will be poured out upon them. Lord, I pray that you give them freedom, open up their hearts to ask questions, Oh God. I know, that many times we are afraid to ask questions, we think that it is a dumb one, and many times it's the one that everyone else wished that they would have asked, also. I pray God that you, by your spirit, would give liberty to each one of us here. I pray, Father, that you would give each one of us a profitable time. Lord, help me by your grace to answer the questions of these young men, Lord. May they prosper in these things, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Q: What do you do about finances? How do you know when you are financially ready to seek a wife?

A: That's a good question. In fact, that's one of the ways that you can discern before the Lord, "Is it time? Am I ready to get married?". If you have a lot of financial burden, and you've gotten yourself in debt, and you're working at five dollars an hour, it's not time for you to get married. God is not opening a door for you to get married. So, you need to have some financial stability if you want to enter into marriage. However, I'm not saying that you have to have your own business, and it's well established, and you have to have twenty thousand dollars in the bank before you get married. I'm not saying you have to do that, but for most of the young men in this room, that's not an improbable figure for you young men. I'm not saying you should have twenty thousand dollars in the bank, but I think you ought to have a few thousand dollars in

the bank, and have a few basic things taken care of (I.E.), a car that is paid for, and one that's serviceable, and maybe you've got your tools, and some of the basic thing you'll need in life. I feel if you have a few thousand dollars in the bank and you have a descent job that makes a good wage, why, I feel you're financially stable enough to get married.

Q: What did you mean by releasing your emotions?

A: It may be, some of you younger ones don't even understand that term yet, and praise God that you don't. But what I mean by that is, allowing your heart to begin to have affection, and fall in love, with a young lady. That's what I mean by releasing your emotions. As you get a little older, you will find that your heart begins to go out, and your affections my begin to be directed in a young lady's direction. That's when you need to get a hold of those emotions, and, of course, they should be held in line until you have gotten to that place where you feel that God wants you to marry, you've cleared it with all authorities, you've cleared it with the young lady, you're entering into a courtship relationship, and now it's ok to release your emotions, or begin to fall in love, which is of God' plan for a young man and a young lady.

Q: How do you discern when God is knocking on your heart, telling you it's time to get married? In this particular situation, I've allowed my emotions to go already in the direction of a young lady, now we realize, it's not right to do that. I've pulled my emotions back. Now, do I take that as a leading from the Lord, or not?

A: I want to encourage you in that one, you pull your emotions back, and in their proper place. If you are a brother, you don't want to make a decision until those emotions are on the shelf, because it will be very hard for you to discern the will of God if your emotions are in the way, and that is the reason why we don't let our emotions go. Love is blind, fellows! You won't be able to discern anything! You won't be able to discern godly character. If you let your emotions go, it's too late! Many times when this happens early [with] a young man or a young lady, their emotions are gone, and then all of a sudden the father finds out about it, and the father says, "I don't think this is God's will for your to get married. They don't have the same convictions that you do. Many things came come in there. I don't feel good about it," but you're already gone! And you can't discern! Your dad will say, "Look at this weakness in character, and this one, and this one," and you can't even hear it because your emotions have been kicked into gear. So, you need to learn to put these emotions on the shelf (that's what I was telling the girls). They were asking the question, "What do you do when affection rises up to a young man?".

You put it on the shelf, and you leave it there. That's exactly what I do when I go to Africa away from my wife, I put her on the shelf when I get there. If I didn't put her on the shelf, I'd be missing her terrible. So, emotionally, I put her on the shelf, and she stays there. And I serve the Lord, preach, pray, and all of those things. And then about two days before I'm ready to come home, I take her off the shelf emotionally, and everyone else knows it. I'm singing, rejoicing, and talking about going home. Well, what I do, that's exactly what you need to do.

Put those emotions on the shelf and leave them there until God gives clear direction that it's time for you to pursue a relationship. And after you've gotten a clearing from all authority, and you know that it's the will of God, and it's the right one, then you can take those emotions down of the shelf just like I do when I'm ready to go back from Africa.

Q: How are you supposed to take an interest in a girl if you're not supposed to let your emotions go?

A: You're not supposed to take an interest in a girl. That's the answer to the question. You're not supposed to take an interest in a girl, you're supposed to leave all of that behind until you sense that God is saying to you, through the witness of God's Spirit, and through authorities moving in your life, that it's time for you to seek a wife. That's when you start looking, and taking an interest in a girl.

Q: Aren't you supposed to get married when you fall in love with somebody?

A: That is totally backwards, but that is the way the world does it. The world, they marry the one they love. We as Christians, love the one we marry. And there's a big difference between the two of those. Look, if a young lady and a young man get together, you fall in love if there's some half-descent interest between the two of you. And many times, it's a wrong match, because there was no discernment. That is the whole reason for holding our emotions back. You shouldn't take an interest in a young lady before you have checked the thing out and you know that she is a godly young lady, she has godly character, she seems to be compatible, she seems to have the same basic convictions, I have an interest there, I've checked it out with father and mother, and when all of those things are done, you'll fall in love. But you should hold it back until all of those things are clear, and here's the purpose for that, young brother: That insures that you fall in love with a young lady that meets all of the requirements of a godly wife.

And, see, the honeymoons do end, and you get back to normal life, and babies are crying in the middle of the night, and all of those things happen. You want a godly young lady who's going to be there in the thick and the thin, and who will love you for better or for worse, even if you get sick, even if you get cancer and have your leg cut off, she'll still be beside you, because you found one that had a commitment to Jesus Christ and a commitment to godly character. So, you don't want to fall in love with one that isn't like that. So you hold those emotions back. Guard over them like a soldier guards over a gate.

Q: How do you know if your emotions are going out, and how do you hold them back?

A: I think that most in this room know the emotions of love. But it may be, for some of you that are younger, you don't know what I'm talking about, and praise God that you don't. As you get older, you will. As you get older, and your emotions begin to rise in your heart towards young ladies, you'll know what it is. And how do you hold it back? You crucify it. By the grace of God, you do not allow them, just as I do not allow mine. There are many young ladies around here, and there are many married women in this church. I am not allowed an emotional relationship with those women, I'm only allowed the spiritual relationship, and I have a spiritual fellowship with many of the sisters in this church, here, but I'm only allowed an emotional relationship with one, and that's my wife. You do the same thing that I do: I crucify those feelings if they ever rise up. I crucify them by the grace of God, and walk in purity towards the sisters that are in the church.

Q: What do you do if you don't have a father?

A: You find a father in the fellowship where you are at. You go to your spiritual authorities in your fellowship, and ask one of those preachers to watch over and see your courtship. And it may be that they may find a spiritually mature brother in the congregation [or] brother and wife, and they can just come in and watch over your courtship. That works very well. We've seen that done, and I've even done it. It works very well. It doesn't have to be a father. It should be if you have a father, but if it can't be your father, another spiritual authority could do the same thing, fulfill that role, and give you a blessing through that whole thing.

Q: Do you share your innermost feelings about a young lady with another brother?

A: My council to you is the same as I gave the young ladies: Don't do it. Share it with your father and your mother. Here's what happens, you sit down with your buddy, and you start sharing your thoughts, you're fanning the flames of emotion all the while you are sharing. And sometimes young fellows will do it for a couple of hours, you know. Just sitting and talking about this girl, and this, and that, and how you are feeling. All you are doing is fanning those emotions. It's not good.

Most of the time, you share it with your best friend and say, "Now, don't you tell," and he'll tell someone. It just happens. And what that does, it makes this whole boyfriend-girlfriend nonsense that we have in the church. It shouldn't be there. Take your thoughts, and your impressions, and hide them in your heart like Mary does, and if you need to talk them over with somebody, talk it over with mom and dad. Get some council from them. If you are having a struggle, if you have a young lady, and you're having some emotions towards them, and you are having a struggle, go to your dad. Say, "Dad, I'm having a problem, here. I'm struggling with my thoughts and emotions toward a young lady. Bring it before your dad, and your dad will help you, help you to put them in their proper place, and leave them where they belong until it's God's for you to do otherwise. And he can give you some godly council also on whether you should even be having those thoughts toward that young lady. It may be that he wouldn't feel good at all about the young lady that you are emotions feelings towards.

Q: What do you mean when you say, "Let the motivation of the desire of a life's partner motivate you to change your life and your character?"

A: I don't believe it's wrong to look ahead in life and say, "I'm not prepared for what is coming, and I'm going to prepare since I feel that down the road, God will probably want me to get married,". It's not a wrong motivation to change your life for that, any more than it would be to send a call to the ministry on my heart ten years before it became a reality in my life. Those ten years are years of preparation, and God is was even putting the call there ten years early so I would get ready, and change my priorities, and begin to dig in the word. So I don't feel it's a wrong motivation, or a wrong motive, to look ahead and say, "I believe I will be getting married. I'm going to prepare my life for that day which is to come,".

Q: How do you discern how long you should talk to a young lady?

A: In some settings, if you just say a few words, everyone will think something wrong of you. In other settings, it's considered rude if you don't sit for a long time and visit with a girl. I believe that what we need to do is live by right principles. To spend a long time with a young lady is not wise, so if others think you are ruse, they'll just have to think that you are rude. You are living by the principles of God's word, which comes above, and they'll just have to think that, and you may have the bear the cross of that are. On the other side, if you are among some who would think other thoughts to you, I think you should go ahead and be a spiritual brother and relate to young ladies just like you relate to young men, and let them do what they want with it. It's the only way to bring things back down where they are supposed to be, where we can be free of all of this boyfriend-girlfriend stuff, and have spiritual fellowship. So, I believe that moderation on both sides of that question is what we need.

Q: What are the best steps to take when you feel like you are being chased by a girl?

A: There's nothing wrong with getting a little coldness about you. If there is a young lady that you sense it moving in, she's flashing her eyes your way, and she's always there where you are, and she's saying nice

things about you and all of that, you just back away from you, and let her sense a little bit of a coldness from you. That's the first thing you should do. "And then from there, you need to go to your spiritual authorities", I told the young ladies. They were so glad to receive the protection of their fathers in this area. Well, you have protection from your parents in this area. You don't have to wrestle through that area all by yourself. If you feel like you are being chased by a young lady, you go to your father and mother, and maybe your mother can just have a little chat with the young lady, and that will take care of it. It's the only way to get this thing back down where it's supposed to be. You all have to work together on it. If we will, it won't last very long, the girls will quit chasing the boys, and the boys will quit staring at the girls. And that's usually the way it works. Well, the boys aren't so bold, they don't move in and talk to girls, they just stand back there and stare. Young men, don't do that to the girls. Don't do that. It makes them so uncomfortable, and you'll probably get a visit from their father if you knew all of the things I told them while they were in this room.

Q: You said treat sisters in the church as your sisters, with all purity. What do you do with the one you like?

A: You don't like her. You put that on the shelf. It's unlawful for you to let your heart start heading in her direction, because you are too young. Until you discern that you are a man, and your authorities are clear, that it's time for you to move ahead in marriage, then you can start liking her when everything is clear. Until then, you need to crucify those feelings. Don't let them rise up. Just put them aside. God will give you the grace to do that. You'll be able to leave it aside, I assure you. If you let God enlighten your heart in this area, you will be able to do something with your emotions. You have to be able to do something with your emotions. All of us married men do it all the time, so you can too. God will not ask you to do something you cannot do.

Q: We should relate to the sisters in the church just like our sisters? What do you do if you don't have a sister?

A: You have a mom. How do you relate to your mom? With all purity; with rightness of heart, and I believe that you can learn most of those interactions with your mom just like you could a sister. It would be basically the same.

Q: Is it wrong to have a friend that is a girl?

A: She should be your sister, you should be her brother, in the Lord. There's nothing wrong with that, there's nothing wrong with visiting with the sisters in the church. There's nothing wrong if your two families get together in the evening to sit and play a game. There's nothing wrong with all of those things. Those things are good and right, they are under the watch-care of your parents, and there's nothing wrong with that. But the question, and the carefulness you have here is that if you spend too much time with your "friend" that is a girl, you'll begin an emotional relationship there, and that you don't want. But, on a spiritual level, on a spiritual fellowship: Yes, there's nothing wrong with that. However, I do have a caution about how much time you spend with the girl. With any girl.

Let's say you meet a girl at church, and for half an hour the two of you are sitting on the pew together, visiting. That doesn't seem very wise. As a married man, I don't do that. Now, if a lady needs some council, I'll give them some council, but I don't walk up to any of the sisters in the church and sit down and have a fellowship with them. No, they belong to somebody else. My fellowship is not a close one in that sense, it's more distant, because she's a sister, she's another man's wife, and I'm married also.

Q: What do you do if you've failed already in this area of your emotions?

A: It's very possible that there are some young men in this room that have failed with that. How do you heal that? Well, don't despair. God will heal it. Now, it will never be like it could have been, because you already know what it is to let our heart go in the direction of a young lady. It will never be like it could have been if you had kept the thing on a shelf, and saved your heart and your emotions for that one girl that God has for you. It can never be like that, but it can still be very good, and if you face your failure, God can deal with your failure and help you to see that your emotions are wrong. And I believe you can learn to put your emotions on the shelf. And God usually puts some distance between the relationship you had, and the relationship you will have for your life partner, and I believe that God puts distance in there, so the other will be far enough in the past to give you a fresh start with the one that is your life partner.

And many young men and young ladies struggle with that, that God puts a distance to the emotional relationship they had. Maybe they're twenty three or twenty four, and it is long before God sends them a partner, but God knows what he's doing. He's putting a gap there, so that relationship is far enough into the distance that it won't hinder their marriage like it would have if they had married six or eight months ago. That would really hinder a marriage.

Q: I have entered into a relationship, now I see that it's wrong, how do I make the break, and how big of a break needs to be made?

A: You do need to make a break, there, and probably for a time, you need to back away a little bit further there than you would from others. I think that the young lady should expect that and be doing the same thing. If you've been writing notes, and your hearts have been drawn out towards each other, you need to make a break, and it needs to be a clear brake. In some situations where the emotions have really gone too far, it might be good for you to do a little bit of voluntary service somewhere else that you can separate yourself totally from that relationship for a time, and then come back after you have gotten your bearings straight, and be back into fellowship there in the church.

Q: If you have developed an emotional relationship, and it's a close relationship, and you're getting close to marriage, what do you do?

A: My best council to the young man and the young lady, working through their parents and with their parents, I think they ought to break off the relationship, put it on the shelf, put a good long space of time between you, so much so that you can be free, both of you, so much from your emotions, but then you can pray about it and discern it, and clear it with mom and dad and then move back into it. And if it God's will, yes, those emotions will take up right where you left off, but you desperately need, to get that thing broken up so that it can be cleared with the proper authorities, and you can get your head back on straight and discern this thing by godly principles rather than emotions. By emotions is a terrible way to chose a mate. Oh, there are so many shipwrecked emotions in America, because like the young man said a little earlier, "you meet a girl, fall in love, and you marry her". Yeah, well, let's take a look at that: You have a fifty percent divorce rate in America because that's the way they do it. God has a better way to do it.

Q: The council was given that you have to be careful how much intimate, spiritual fellowship you have with a young lady?

A: True. You do need to. You need to have an open heart before the Lord. God's spirit will help you and prompt you when things are not right, but just as a general rule, it's not good to spend a lot of time visiting

with a young lady. It just doesn't come out right. But if you do find yourself many times in, oh, maybe you're in the work of God, and this happens sometimes. You might be a schoolteacher, and there might be a schoolteacher, and there's quite a bit of interaction there, you'll know in your heart. God's spirit will prompt you, and, especially once your heart is enlightened to what we've been teaching you, you'll know in your heart that this thing is getting out of order. Something isn't right with it, and then you need to back off.

Q: In your youth group, what kind of activities do you have that you can help the youth group that they don't fall into these boyfriend-girlfriend things, and all of that?

A: If you're going to have a youth group (and some don't even believe in them), it needs to be a spiritual youth group. And you give directions in the direction of spiritual activities, soul-winning together, Bible studies, prayer meetings, sharing times, and singing at rest-homes. There are many spiritual ministries that a group of young people can do. They are beautiful opportunities to get together, and it also gives young, and young ladies, to evaluate the character of those that they are among, their peers. When you are working together, preaching, working on the street corners, passing out tracts, in the rest-home ministering to needy people, they are beautiful opportunities to evaluate character, and you should have your eyes open to evaluate the godly character of the young ladies, so that when you do decide that "It's time for me to discern God's life partner for my life," you'll have something to discern from. You'll know, "This one is pretty foolish, she kinda flirts with the other boys. I'm not really interested in a young lady that has been flirting with all of the rest of the boys. I'd like to have one that's mine," and those are the kinds of ways that you discern God's will.

Q: How do you answer when someone comes up to you, maybe you just met them, and they ask you, do you have a girl?

A: This doesn't happen much in our circle, but it happens a lot in other circles. The other girls, what do you tell them? Here's what I would tell them, "I've given my life to the Lord Jesus, and I've committed my heart not to enter any emotional relationships with any young lady until I know assuredly that it's time for me to get married,". That's a mouthful, and they'll probably go, "...oh...," [laughs].

Q: My mother has instructed me that there are some clothes that young men shouldn't wear, because it becomes a flirtation, will you address that a little bit, here?

A: We'll do this as the last question. Yes, there are. I'll just tell you, since I am married to a wife, and I'll share some of the things that she has shared with me that become a temptation to ladies.

Tight-fitted pants become a temptation to the younger ladies. It's not right, even though you are slim and muscular, and all of those things, my personal conviction is that only your wife should know how muscular you are. I don't think that you men, any more than the young ladies, should be going around showing your figures, how strong you are. So, tight-fitting pants, tight-fitting shirts, t-shirts in public, muscle shirts, tank tops, I feel are so immodest. It stirs up thoughts in young ladies. You are defrauding the young ladies, and it's not the will of God to do that. As I said a little bit earlier, I'm not saying that everyone has to button their top button all of the time, but if you're not going to button your top button, don't leave two of them unbuttoned, and if you are going to do it, wear a t-shirt underneath it so that your hair doesn't hang out, because that hair is a temptation to a young lady. That's something that stirs her, just like there is some things that young ladies do that stir your emotions and stir your passions. There are things that stir young ladies, and your hair hanging out of your shirt does that. And if you are one that has a lot of hair, and with your t-shirt on, still there is a lot of hair of over it, you may need to consider buttoning the top button

anyway, except when you are out in the fields working our out on the job. Those are things that I believe that young men need to consider in light of this whole subject of defrauding. Many times we put the load on the girls, and it's true that are we are stirred by eyes, and they are stirred by touch and by things that are said, but even though that it true, women are also stirred by the things that they see, though not by the point that men are. So, it's good for you to consider to stand in front of a mirror, to go to your mother, and ask her for a little council about what you wear, because they do become a temptation to young ladies.

Comments from Denny Kenaston:

With that answer, I think that is all. I appreciate all of your questions. You did well. For a minute there, I thought we'd have three or four questions and be done, but it seems that some of you young en are a little timid, and I appreciate you overcoming those feelings of insecurity that you have, and fear to ask the questions, to just open up, be a man, and put those questions out there. This has been a very good session. The things that you asked, and the answers tat have given will be a help to other as they read or listen to them, and think about their own lives.

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