

(Godly Courtship) 02 Godly Courtship (Part 2)

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon on godly courtship emphasizes the importance of emotional control, biblical principles, and the role of authority in pursuing romantic relationships.

Duration: 1:02:01

Scripture: Matthew 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, 1 Timothy 5:12

Topics: "Courtship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses his concern about not being able to finish what he needs to say in the allotted time. He acknowledges that the topic of courtship is a pressing issue among God's people and emphasizes the importance of addressing it thoroughly. The speaker highlights the power of emotions, particularly in the context of courtship, and the potential challenges that can arise when couples are told to spend less time together. He concludes by praying for the young people in attendance, asking God to imprint the teachings on their hearts and bring about a change within them.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Yes, well, I would have to say that in my busy life as a preacher for the last many years, my wife has an amazing way of keeping things going in our relationship, and I thank God for her.

Why don't we stand to our feet and have a word of prayer? Father in Heaven, God, we bless You and we praise You today, Lord, for Your goodness to us. Yea, Lord, multitudes, multitudes of couples would have loved to have sit in a room like this twenty, twenty-five, thirty years ago, but they didn't. And multitudes of struggles and trials and hurts and pains have taken place because they couldn't.

But now, God, we are here today and all these young people are here today, and they're young and they're fresh and they're full of dreams and visions and they're looking ahead and they're not married yet, Lord. God, I pray that You'll take the truths that we've been teaching and that we will teach further through these lessons, Lord, and write them upon the hearts of these young people by Your Spirit. Father, I know that nothing that I can say will do anything to change anyone's minds, but only what You say in their hearts.

And I pray that You will bear testimony by Your Spirit in each heart. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Well, I want to say this before we get into the class today.

Someone came to me yesterday after the class and said, Brother Denny, would you please do us young people a favor? Don't cut anything because of time. Please don't do that. We'll skip our lunch.

We don't care what else we have to miss. But don't skip anything because of time. As I'm working day by day on the lessons and preparing, I see no way to finish what I need to say today.

And according to the schedule, I'm supposed to finish what I need to say today. And tomorrow we're going to hear some testimonies. So, I'm not sure where I'm going to fit it in, but we will have another session sometime.

It may be on Saturday. We may cut into part of the lunch tomorrow. I'm not sure yet.

I want to talk to others about it. But there's no way that I can finish what I need to say today. I could make a quick work of it and cut some things to fit into the time frame.

But I feel like the time frame is a very little thing compared to the influence that this can have on your lives and who knows how many other lives. I know that this subject is one of the hottest issues among God's people all over this country. Everywhere I go, that's what they say to me.

Preach on courtship. What do you think about courtship? We need some answers. Things aren't working right.

What does the Bible say? So, I just cannot in my heart make a quick job of it, give you a little outline and end it here today. So, I want to let you know that, lest by the time I finish here today, you wonder how I could be done. I'm not.

Alright, yesterday we ended with some very stimulating thoughts about our emotions. I'm sure that I left you all thinking and pondering many things yesterday. Or I hope that you were.

I trust that you were pondering your own life. Some of the things that have gone on in your heart. Some of the things that you've allowed already.

Maybe some things that you were tempted to allow. But we want to continue now on that subject of our emotions and how important they are today. I want to begin by defining a few terms.

I have four words that we'd like to give definition to. And we'll be referring to these words all the way through, so I think it's important that we give them definition. The first word is the word court.

That's where we get our word courtship. The word court means this. Devoted attention in order to win favor.

Devoted attention in order to win favor. Now, we use that word court in many ways. But of course, the way we're using it here today is in the area of our relationships.

Devoted attention in order to win the favor of a young lady is the context that we're giving it in. And that is the historical context of the word courtship. If you trace it back, that is the way that it is used.

Alright, the next word we want to look at in definition is the word flirt. In the dictionary, I'll just give you the words in the dictionary. They're very revealing.

I had to think as I was studying this word flirt, I don't think any young people are going to want to do this anymore. Or want to have anything to do with the word flirt. Here's what it means.

It means to court triflingly. And courtship is a very serious thing. It means to express emotions of love without serious intent.

It means to play at love. It means to toy with love. That's very interesting definitions, aren't they? And that's exactly what it is.

Young people who flirt, they make a game out of one of the most serious relationships of life. They make a game out of it. They turn it into a toy.

They think it's something that they can play with. And let's see how this happens. And let's see what this is.

And let's see how this feels. And let's see how she reacts to this. They're making a game out of the most serious relationship of their life.

I don't think you want to do any flirting. Alright, the next word is the word defraud. That's a Bible word.

It means to overreach. To go beyond. To lead someone on and then back out.

That definition is used mostly in the business world. You defraud somebody when you lead them on in something and then you just back out. You defraud them.

I have a little computer dictionary that I carry around in my briefcase because it's small. I'll give you the word for word definition out of this little dictionary. Listen to this one well.

To deceive or trick a person into giving up a valuable possession. Think about that one. To deceive or trick a person into giving up a valuable possession.

Like their emotions. And I know that we have a clear standard here about giving up the valuable possession of our virginity. When you get outside the walls and the context of what is happening in this room right here and the standards that are written in our hearts and you get out there in the midst of what is called the Christian world out there, there are young men that are deceiving and tricking young ladies into giving up the most valuable possession that they own.

Their virginity. And it's called defrauding. And I guess that is the clearest sense of the word as we will see it in its context there in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 a little bit later.

It means to stir up desires that cannot be lawfully fulfilled. I believe that's Brother Gothard's definition. That's a very good one.

To stir up desires that cannot be lawfully fulfilled is to defraud. It's like taking a piece of cake and ice cream and holding it out there and stirring up the desire and creating the desire to want it and then taking it back and putting it away. You cannot have it.

Alright, the next word we want to look at is the word dating. And some of these words are just our modern American words. But we have to look at their definitions so that we can decide whether we like these words or not and whether we want to use these words and whether we want to enter into what these words mean.

Dating is a temporary romantic relationship. It happens all the time in the world. Some that are sitting in this room know what I'm talking about.

Temporary romantic relationships. It gets pretty close to that whole area of flirting. I want to see what love is all about.

I want to play with it for a while. So I'm going to enter into temporary romantic relationships. And I know that in this room, we don't have much problem with that.

That's freely done in the world as they get together. But with God's people, this is often done in a more of a secret way. God's people, the young people, they often have temporary romantic relationships also.

But they do it a little bit more secretly because they know that it's not allowed to be done like the world does it. They do it through thoughts, little looks, notes, little talks, long stares across the room, sparkling eyes. That's how they do it.

They ride in the same car. When the young people are going to a certain place, they just end up in the same car. And I could expound on that one quite a bit here today.

But I think you know what I'm talking about. Often the young people say, oh, we're not dating. Or the mom or the dad will say, maybe a pastor comes and says, what's going on here? Oh, they're not dating.

They're not dating. Well, we have to question that. A few Scriptures that we would like to look at is introduction here, and we're still just making introduction.

I know it probably doesn't sound like introduction, but remember that I started in the middle from yesterday. A few Scriptures here. Matthew chapter 5, as relating to this matter of godly courtship and all that surrounds it.

Blessed are the pure in heart. You don't need to turn to these. I'm just going to read them to you quickly.

Blessed are the pure in heart. The second one is in 1 Timothy 5.12 where it says, young men, treat the younger women as sisters with all purity. Now, what that means to me is, young men, you treat all these sisters over here except the one that you feel like God would have you to court and marry.

You treat all these sisters over here just like you do your sister. 2 Timothy 2, verse 22 says, flee also youthful lusts. Stay away from them.

There are lusts which the youth are tended to. That as you grow older, you're not so tended to them. There are lusts that youth are tended to.

God says in His Word, admonishing you to flee those youthful lusts. That means, as we so clearly have heard this week already, you stay away from them. Don't you get near them.

Romans chapter 13 says these words, Make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. Make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. And then one last word.

I believe it's in Timothy. It says, Let all that nameth the name of Jesus depart from iniquity. And that word iniquity means something that's good that has been perverted.

That's iniquity. Something that is good. Something that is right.

Something that is natural. Something that is good. Something that God wants.

Perverted and all twisted up. That's iniquity. And God wants us to depart from it.

As I ponder the truths and the principles that are being shared here, I thought, you know, we are treading on new ground. As I studied material for these messages, I pulled a couple of books, Christian books, on this matter of courtship, and I was appalled at what a generation or two of Christians have been being taught concerning this matter. And after I began to look and to see what the Christian people have been being taught, it's no surprise to me that immorality is running rampant among the churches and that the divorce rate is just about as high in the church as it is in the world.

We are treading on new ground. There are a couple of men in this country that are raising up the standard of it, of a right standard, and we praise God for that. The Mennonite people have held some of what we are talking about for many years, but nothing near like what we are saying here these couple of days.

To tell a young person to hold the reins of their emotions in check is new ground. But I may say it's not new ground to us here. It's something that we understand.

But it's new ground. And I'm sure that there will be some that may listen to this tape and when they hear those kind of words, they will shut it off and say, that guy is crazy! Turn to 1 Thessalonians 4 now. I really enjoyed studying 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 1-8.

And I look forward to digging deeper in it. But there's one thing I'd like you to notice before we read these eight verses. I'd like you to notice that the word defraud is found in this portion of Scripture.

And I'd like you also to notice that it is nestled in there in the middle of words like fornication, lust of concupiscence, which is the lust of passion, and uncleanness. This word defraud is nestled in there in the middle of these other words. And I don't believe that God put it in there out of context.

God has it in context. And the reason why I believe that God has it in context is this. If you don't get a hold of this matter of the defrauding, and you play around with this, the other things are going to happen.

Defrauding, fornication, the lust of passion, which is out of control, and uncleanness. Reading from 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 1, Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more. What a beautiful request that Paul had for them.

He wanted them to abound more and more in the things that he had already taught them. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,

that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God, that no man, or actually that word man is in italics, that no one, man or woman, go beyond and defraud his brother in any manner, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth the things that I am talking about, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit." And we'll stop reading there. That's an awesome portion of Scripture if you get in there and dig a little bit.

As we get down to the hard issue of emotions, we all have to recognize that emotions that are allowed to get out of control end in fornication, the lust of passions, and uncleanness. We know that. Now, I'd like to put a diagram on the board.

I guess we have a pen up here yet that works. It's a simple diagram. We're just going to put two little stick people up here, since I'm such a great artist.

We'll put the man over here. And on the other side of the board, we'll put the woman. Here we have a young man and a young lady, and it looks like he's a little out of size, isn't he? Praise God.

Let me work on that one just a little bit here. It's alright if he's a little out of size that way. Okay.

Now, we have a young man and we have a young lady. I'm going to put a couple of arrows here pointing to the center of the board. Here we have a young lady and a young man, and let's just go through it in the right way first.

This young man and this young lady, they go through all the proper means of discerning God's will, which we'll be speaking about tomorrow. And they get a clearing from their authorities and from God that they should pursue a marriage relationship together. And at that point, something begins to spark in each one of their hearts.

And it's called the emotion of love. I believe that it's not until you get to that place where all of it is clear, and Dad said it was okay, and Mom thinks it's okay, and those who are godly who love me think it's okay, and she thinks it's okay, and he thinks it's okay, that all of a sudden this spark, and I just put a little heart up above the heads to represent that, this spark begins to work inside the heart and it's called the emotion of love. At that point, a bonding begins to take place between these two people.

And they begin to move toward each other. Their hearts begin to move. And I'll just put some little lines on here, like a graph.

They begin to move toward each other. Not necessarily that they walk toward each other, and now they're walking next to each other, but in their emotions, in their heart, in their affections, they begin to move toward each other. As the young man begins to win the heart, or court the young lady, their emotions begin to move together.

And it continues. And it continues to move. And it gets closer and closer.

And the closer that it gets to the center, the more intense it is. In fact, those of us who know it by experience, it's very powerful. You only have to watch a young couple that is courting, and it's about a

month before it's time for them to get married.

And sit them down and say, we think you're seeing too much of each other. And you'll find out real fast how powerful this emotion is. I've seen the sweetest young people who were always under authority start chafing on that one.

And the reason for it is because the emotions have gotten so strong, and they're coming together so powerfully, that it really goes hard to hear somebody say, you two are being together too much. You need to slow it down until marriage. And they don't want to hear that.

But, we who know this by experience know that that is the best thing that they need right now. But they don't understand that. So, here we go with these emotions, and they continue to move together.

And I believe that they are supposed to be consummated in marriage. And in the marriage bed. What a thrill to me, as a pastor, having had the opportunity to marry several couples, and having watched them go through this whole process, and yet holding themselves, because they knew, because they were instructed by their parents, that they need to hold themselves, even though they're heading to the marriage altar, that they need to hold these emotions some, and not just let them go.

But what a joy, on that wedding day, to see them sitting there behind that table of honor, at a reception, where now their hearts have been totally released to each other. It is one of the sweetest joys. It's what makes the wedding so exciting.

That's why everybody wants to come to them. It's to see the consummation of this emotional relationship coming together. Now, what I've described up here to you and diagrammed is a universal principle known by everyone who has entered into the relationship of a husband and a wife.

There's only one problem. You young people have not. So, you may not understand it like we do.

We know it by experience. All you can do is go by what we say. But I would really encourage you to listen to us.

We know what we're talking about. Now, the problem comes in when this whole process is allowed to take place either too fast in courtship or before the relationship has been cleared by all the proper authorities. You see, this is a universal principle.

It'll happen with any young man and any young lady. You can take them from different backgrounds. You can make one of them a married man who works at an office somewhere and a secretary.

And if they do too much allowing of hearts to move together, it'll mess itself up. And the man, the husband, or the woman will say, what have I done? This is what happened. Those emotions began to move together and they were not stopped.

It was an unlawful relationship, but they were not stopped. And they just kept moving and moving and it almost seems like there's a magnet in the middle there, Brother Philip, that's pulling it together. And it's natural.

And it's God-planned. And it's the way God made you. But it must be done in a lawful way.

And at the proper time. Then it's very beautiful. Several applications that I'd like to make in this matter of defrauding.

And we'll be referring back to this diagram some more as we go through these lessons. Here's a few applications of defrauding. A young lady can stir up desires that she cannot lawfully fulfill in a young man by the way she dresses.

That is an application of defrauding. You dress yourself in such a way, in a sensuous way. You carry yourself in a sensuous way.

You carry with you or about you a sensuous spirit. And young ladies do, some of them, because of the sensuality in their own heart. It comes out.

That whole picture there becomes an area of defrauding to young men and to men. Because God made a man to be stirred by that which he sees. And if you, as a young lady, unwisely dress yourself in such a way that draws the eyes of the young men your way, maybe at your feet, maybe at the legs, maybe at your face, maybe at your body, by the dress that you wear, you are defrauding.

You are stirring up a desire in that young man or in men that you cannot lawfully fulfill. And in most cases with young ladies of the caliber of the ones that are in this room, you're stirring up desires in them that you would never dream of ever wanting to fulfill. But many times I think the young ladies do it innocently and they don't realize it.

This is an area of defrauding. Young men, it also applies to you, but not in the same magnitude as it does to the young ladies. But you guys know how to dress and you know what draws the attention of the young ladies.

You know that. You know those tight-fitting pants and that tight shirt that makes those muscles, you know, show up real nice. And the short-sleeved shirt, you know, so that when you reach for something at the table, you know, the old muscle puts out there pretty good.

You guys know what you're doing. You know what I'm talking about. That's defrauding a young lady.

You take your shirt and you decide you're not going to wear a t-shirt and you're going to leave your shirt unbuttoned and all your hair is showing up here in the front. That's defrauding. That's defrauding to a young lady.

I'm telling you, I'm serious, and you know what I'm talking about. You do those things and you know you do them. You're not dumb, but we aren't either.

We came that way before you. Alright, another one. Another application of defrauding.

You can be a flirt. You can play at love. You can draw out a person's emotions with no serious intent, just for fun.

When you do that, you're defrauding. You are drawing out that person, but you have no serious intent at all. Who knows what the motives are? Man's heart is filled with all kinds of different motives.

Maybe you just like to see what she does when you wink at her. Maybe you just like to see what he does when you sparkle your eyes at him and say, you're really special to me. I'm not sure what the motives are,

but the point is, if you draw out a person's emotions and their affections, your way, without a serious intent, you're defrauding them.

Number three. You can lead someone on in a romantic relationship and then back out of it. That happens pretty often.

Mostly with young men, wisely, without much careful prayer, without seeking a lot of counsel, think that they're in love. And they think that they've found the one. And they move in on their own to build a relationship.

And they let it happen for a while and then they realize, I'm not sure that this is right and I don't know if I really like this girl. And then they back out of the whole thing. And what they do when they back out of that relationship is that they defraud the young lady and they tear the emotions of her heart.

This is defrauding. And remember, the law is love. And that's not love.

It's one of the most unloving things you could do. And I'm sure that from time to time it happens also the other way around with the young lady and the young man. But usually it's the young man who initiates those things and then backs out of it.

But not always. You can defraud in your courtship by speeding up this emotional process of bonding. You can defraud one another by doing that.

By touches, hugs, just a little goodnight kiss on the cheek. By spending too much time together. By spending too much time together telling each other how much you really love each other.

You can speed up this process. And it requires some wisdom to know how fast that process should go. And that's why you desperately need in your courtship relationship some wise counsel watching over you.

Because you can speed up the process. And if you get to this place three months before it's time for you to be married, you are going to have some desperate problems to work through. But even if it doesn't fail in immorality, still, you're defrauding one another.

You are stirring up desires that you cannot lawfully fulfill yet. And it's defrauding. And I tell you, it is the defrauding that Paul is talking about here in 1 Thessalonians.

He's saying, God wants you to be sanctified. He wants every area of your life to be sanctified. And He wants this area of moral purity, and this area of your relationship, and the area of marriage, and the area of coming together in marriage.

He wants it to be sanctified. So you can defraud by speeding up the process of the emotional bonding and making it happen too fast. And I won't say anything more about touching because I want to get into that much clearer tomorrow.

You can defraud in courtship by using your new emotional powers to force the other, the young lady or the young man, to compromise and do things that they didn't want to do. And do things that you agreed that you wouldn't do. But as the relationship gets closer and closer together, oft times the young man realizes the power that he now has over this young lady, because she trusted him and she released her heart to him.

And now he's got a new power in his hands. And young men foolishly use that power and force that young lady to do things that she didn't want to do. And he thinks, oh, it'll be alright.

But that young lady carries the wounds of that defrauding into their marriage relationship. And that young man pays for his wonderful liberties that he took for years. Hear ye, hear ye, young people.

This is the defrauding that Paul is talking about here in 1 Thessalonians. And the last one, you can defraud by flirting with and stirring the emotions of another man's wife or another woman's husband. Let me explain what I mean by that.

I guess that could be a seventh point. But we know, the way that I stated that, we know that that is unlawful. But I would like to apply that to you young people in this room.

Let's just look at a church context. We have a young lady. We have a young man in a church fellowship.

And they very foolishly begin to enter into a relationship on their own. They think they know what's best. They know what everybody else thinks, but they're going to move into this relationship anyway.

And they begin to build a relationship. And the one draws the other, and they begin moving together. And maybe after two months of that, they realize this is wrong.

This isn't right. Or maybe they realize, I don't even get along with that girl. And they break the whole thing off.

And then two years later, another young man in the congregation senses that God is leading him to take this young lady over here to be his wife. Well, what a sad thing. What an unloving thing.

Some other fellow in the congregation already dipped his finger into the joys and the delights of this young lady's heart. I tell you, you're defrauding your brother. That's worthy to consider, isn't it? As we young ladies and young men, as we think, oh, I think I'll just play a little bit at this thing called love.

Watch out! Would you like somebody to play with your wife? Of course not! Therefore, whatsoever ye would, but that other brother do unto your wife before you marry her, do ye also unto his wife before he marries her. The law is love. This happens.

It happens a lot. It makes for uncomfortable relationships. You know, soon then, you all find your partners and you get married, and sometimes you stay in the same church and it's always there, you know.

That relationship you had with that other fellow over there, but now he's married and he has children and maybe you come into a time of struggle in your marriage, and you will have some struggles in your marriage, and maybe you begin to question, does he love me? And then you start thinking about that other fellow. It doesn't come out right. I am convinced, thoroughly convinced, that the only way to eliminate all of these hurts is to say, hold those emotions and save them for that special one that God has ordained to be your life partner.

I am thoroughly convinced of that. Even though some may think, that guy is crazy. He is asking us to do something that's impossible.

I don't believe that I am. Now, what is the result of this? Each one of these relationships, each one of these defraudings, it causes this to start happening. This process up here on the board.

An emotional bonding begins to take place. And an emotional bonding is no little thing. It's the bonding of emotions.

So here you've got a couple that they begin to move together and their emotions begin to bond and all of a sudden they decide, this isn't right. And they break that thing up and what happens is they tear the bonding of their emotions. And when you tear emotions, it leaves a sore.

And the sore heals, but the scar is still there. You do that three or four times before you get married. And then, yes, then finally, through all the struggles, through all the stumblings, you get married.

But you bring all those scars with you. And now it's time. Now you have your Adam.

Now you have your Eve. Oh, isn't this wonderful? And you want to give yourself to them, but these scars are there. You know what I'm saying? It's like touching a hot stove, you know.

You touch that hot stove and it left an indelible impression upon you. Don't touch hot stoves. Where there is that subconscious awareness in your heart that when you open yourself up into a relationship, something gets hurt on the inside, so you don't open yourself up to the One that you should open yourself up to completely.

And all the married ones said, Amen. And you bring these hurts and these scars into this beautiful marriage that's supposed to be Adam finding his Eve and Eve finding her Adam. And you can't trust them.

And you can't give yourself to them. And you cannot open yourself up to them and be vulnerable to them. And they sense something's wrong, but they don't know what it is.

And it's deep down in your heart. And you're not sure you want to talk about it. And you don't want to talk about it.

And he got hurt by the way you pushed him away. And he doesn't even know what he did. And I tell you, the list of troubles are endless.

And then they ring the telephone of the marriage counselor and say, we need some help to work through all of this. And the marriage counselor sits him down and he starts digging, and he digs right back to these things in order to try to heal the relationship. How many of you young people are following me? Let me see your hands.

Is it making sense? Good. Praise God. Do you see the seriousness of all of these things? How foolish it is to pair off boyfriend-girlfriend, notes, so-and-so likes so-and-so.

Did you hear? I think Susie likes Johnny. And all that stuff. I tell you, you do that stuff, you have no idea what you're doing.

You have no idea. You think you're playing with a toy. But you're playing with the most important relationship of your entire lifetime.

You don't know what you're doing. You young girls. You get together.

You go over to some other girl's house and you sit around for a couple of hours. It's upstairs in the room where nobody else is because you'd never talk that way in front of mom and dad. What do you think about

Johnny? I think he's cute.

I give him a note. And all that nonsense. And you think, oh, it's just innocent fun.

The young people, they're just having a little innocent fun. Let them learn a little bit. Let them get a little experience.

Yeah, sure. Let them ruin their lives. Let them destroy their marriages.

Send them to the marriage counselors. Go ahead. I tell you, you're playing with fire and you don't realize it how foolish for a young lady to flirt with a boy and try to draw him.

You know, a lot of times young ladies fall into this temptation. They think, I'm the young lady and I can't go get a boy. It's out of biblical order.

It's not proper. Everyone around here would be absolutely appalled if I went and chased after a boy. How do I know I'm going to get a husband? And all you, instead of trusting God, you fill your heart with fears and doubts and all of that.

So what you do, you think, well, I'll just do a little extra work here on my own. And when you're about 15 or 16 years old, you start to put your bid in on a young man. And you flirt with him.

And you flash your eyes at him. And you're at a youth meeting and he's on the other side of the room. And you're just looking at him.

And he looks at you. And he looks a while. And you look and you smile.

And you twinkle at him. And you think, well, I'm just doing a little homework here. And this thing will all work out, you know, when we get to be about 20, 21 years old.

Then I'll have the husband that I need. You fool. You're being very foolish.

You don't know what you're doing. You think you know what you're doing, but you don't know what you're doing. Let's look just a little bit here in closing today at the Old Testament principle of betrothal.

That's a Bible word. I think in the Old Testament it's betrothed. In the New Testament, it's espoused.

We want to look at the Old Testament principle of betrothal. It was the Hebrew process of marriage. The word betroth means an agreement or promise to marry.

An agreement or promise to marry. God gave some specific direction to Israel concerning the agreement of marriage. He gave them some clear directions.

If you will remember the relationship there with Mary and Joseph. There in the New Testament, the book of Matthew, and I think also in the book of Luke, that it says there was a virgin named Mary who was espoused to a husband whose name was Joseph. That is the Old Testament Hebrew process of marriage.

A few things we want to look at about the betrothal. And these are clear principles that God laid out to His people. He said once you've made this agreement, it cannot be changed except for uncleanness.

In the Old Testament, if a young man and a young lady was betrothed, it was marriage. They weren't together yet, but it was marriage. It was considered marriage in the heart of God.

And it was considered marriage by everyone else. You couldn't get out of that relationship except one way. If uncleanness was found during the period of betrothal and the period of the consummation of the marriage, if uncleanness was found, then you could break off that betrothal.

Other than that, you could not break it off. The closest thing we have to it here today is the engagement. But that's gotten pretty weak.

A lot of people break their engagements and tear the heart of the other one into pieces. Point number two. God said, this betrothal, if you are going to break it, it can only be broken by a divorce.

You must give her a divorce. If uncleanness is found there, you must give a divorce. Just like it was a marriage.

Because it was a marriage. Point number three, once you made the agreement of marriage, you were married, even though you had a time of preparation. The young lady would go back to her home and prepare for her marriage.

The young man would go back to his home and prepare a house for his bride. And there was a long period of time. It could have been six months.

I believe most of the time it was about a year. But for that whole year, they were married. You look it up in the Scriptures, and we're not going to look at all the verses here for the sake of time, but you can just get a concordance and look up the word betrothed, and you look up the verses yourself.

God referred to the young lady as a wife. In one of the Scriptures there in Matthew or Luke, I'm not sure which one it is. Oh, it was the angel talking to Joseph.

Fear not, Joseph, to take Mary. How does it go? To be thy wife? To take Mary thy wife. That's the way it is.

Thank you. So God considered the marriage already a marriage, even though they were still apart and in a stage of preparation and in a stage of this relationship that's up here on the board of moving together. And by the way, it was watched over very carefully.

Watched over a lot more carefully than what many of our courtships even are. It was watched over very carefully. But yet it was allowed.

The hearts were allowed to begin to move together and the emotional bonding process began to take place. But it was not allowed to begin until the betrothal was cleared. Notice this principle also.

If a young man had betrothed himself a wife and a war broke out during that time of betrothal, and you know how young men are. I mean, it's time to go. Let's get going.

Let's get our sword. Let's get out there. Let's rise to the challenge.

And God's Word says, no, young man, if you've betrothed a wife, you are not allowed to go to war. Lest you die in the battle and tear the heart of your young wife out before you have married her completely. Now what is the purpose behind these laws or principles? As we so clearly know, God didn't just put laws

in there to make people miserable.

God put those laws and principles in the Bible because He loved His people. God put them there because He wanted to see the closest thing to a Genesis chapter 2 relationship that you could get. He put those principles in there because He wanted solid marriages to last a lifetime.

He put those principles in there because He wanted those marriages to stay together and to preserve a godly seat upon the earth. And He put those principles in there because He was very concerned and jealous over the heart of the young lady. The emotions have been released.

This young lady's emotions have been released. Young man, you are not allowed. You are not allowed to go out to war.

A young lady's emotions have been released in your direction. You are not allowed to go out to war. You may die in the war and break her heart, and I'm concerned about her heart.

And I believe that God put it there because the young men wanted to go to war. Let's go! That's the way men are. They're aggressive.

They're strong. They're visionary. They're adventuresome.

They're leaders. They want to go and do what's right. And God said, no, not this time, young man.

You stay home. You have already drawn the emotions of a young lady. And I will not allow you to break her heart and tear those emotions into pieces.

The law is love. The law is love. In all of this that we're discussing here, the law is love.

And the opposite of that is hurts and wounds and confusion and burdens and separated homes and hurt children, devastated families. And a godly testimony is ruined as a result of defying these principles that we're bringing out here today. They are not little ones, young people.

We're not just dreaming these up. We're not coming up with new ideas. These are principles.

They work if you follow them. They don't work if you don't. I wish I could stand up here and tell you that I have 50 couples of experience behind me to tell you how it works.

I don't. But I know of about 10 or 12 that have followed a lot of what we're saying right here. And they are very happily married and very well adjusted in their relationship.

And Adam has found his Eve. And Eve has found her Adam. May God grant the same for each one of you in all of God's full heart.

May He grant that to each one of you.

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