

Biblical Courtship Session #4 - the When of Biblical Courtship

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the importance of biblical principles in courtship, contrasting it with the dangers of recreational dating.

Duration: 59:17

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, Hosea 4:6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:13, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 1:15-16

Topics: "Biblical Courtship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living every moment of our lives for the glory of God. He highlights that simply acquiring knowledge and principles without a Christ-like character is of little value. The speaker also discusses the significance of teaching children about relationships and sexuality within the context of the parent-child relationship, cautioning against exposing them to worldly influences. He concludes by discussing the transition from adolescence to adulthood and the dangers of allowing young people to enjoy the privileges of adulthood without assuming the responsibilities that come with it.

Transcript

Hello, my name is Paul Washer and we're going to continue our study on biblical courtship. The introduction I have here is courtship is simply the biblical alternative to one of the most destructive practices in history. And that is the idea of recreational dating.

Now what do we mean by recreational dating? We simply mean this. You're seeking to be with the opposite sex but not primarily for the glory of God or to fulfill his purpose in marriage. But it's more recreational or for entertainment or for some sort of experience.

Remember, we must do everything that we do for the glory of God. Now some of the things that we've already considered is this. First of all, we must be aware of our present reality as a people.

That even not only without or outside of evangelicalism is our culture not biblical. Oftentimes within evangelicalism itself, within what's called Christianity in the West, we see many practices that simply cannot be validated by scripture. Also, we talked about that we must be convinced that the entirety of our life must abound to the glory of God.

This is a first principle. You can get all kinds of things right. You can learn all kinds of biblical principles and wisdom and maxims and that sort of thing.

But if you're not convinced that every beat of your heart and every breath is to abound to the glory of God, it will do you little good. Also, we not only need to learn certain principles about different aspects of our lives, but holistically we must understand all of the scripture and we must grow in conformity to Christ. Again, if you get just one tiny thing in the Christian life that you study, but you do not have a Christ-like character, all the things you've studied will do you little good.

Also, we talked about a context for teaching and I mainly spent a lot of time there, I think a couple of sessions, talking about the parent-child relationship. Now, many of you probably were thinking, well, why are we doing this? You know, I'm 21 years old or I'm 30 years old or I'm in college. Well, the reason why we should do this is because, first of all, the family is an extremely important biblical institution.

And when that family is not run according to God's word, then you're going to have problems. There's going to be consequences for breaking God's law, for disobeying His will. And many of us, those of you who are 21, 30 or in college or whatever, there are a lot of things that probably went wrong in your childhood, with regard to unbiblical practices possibly, in your own life, a lack of knowledge of the scriptures, a lack of understanding authority, parental authority, and how you should live under a parent's authority.

So that's why we talked about all those things and they're very, very important. Why? Because when we begin to talk about courtship and we begin to talk about finding a mate, you do realize that's one of the most important things that's ever going to happen in your life. It is.

And you want to get counsel from godly people, wise people, people that God has put in your life. And it is always helpful to gain counsel from your parents. And you say, well, what if my parents are not believers? Well, that is a problem.

But you should still seek to honor your parents, asking their advice, asking their counsel, you see, honoring them and God will honor you. Now, we also talked about how parents must strive to be biblical examples. You know, parents, we talk a lot about authority.

Even elders talk a lot about authority and kings and rulers talk about authority. But not only must we practice authority, we must be worthy of it. And the only way to be worthy of authority is by studying scripture and using authority according to scripture, according to God's principles and for God's glory.

Also, we talked about how parents must not only be biblical examples, they must strive to teach their children the word of God. Also, children must be convinced of their parents role. This is extremely important.

We must be convinced that God established the family and that there's a great treasure there in our family and there's counsel to be received from father and mother. You know, my father passed away when I was 17. My mother passed away just a few years ago.

And even though I've traveled all over the world, I'm married, I have a family and things like that, I would often still return to my mother and ask her counsel. It's not that she ruled over me or had some authority over me, but I've always found that by honoring a parent or honoring an authority, that there was wisdom in that and there was always more positive than negative. Now, we took a look at Ephesians 6, 1 through

3, and how we're supposed to do more than simply obey parents, but that we should honor them.

And that, you know, again, I want to make it clear that it says children obey your parents in the Lord. It doesn't say that adults should be obeying their parents in the Lord. And this is very important.

You should go to your parents. If you're out of the home, you're already living on your own, it doesn't mean that your parents dictate to you or have to give you permission to do what you do, but you should still honor them. You should still seek their counsel.

And when their counsel is biblical, most certainly you should follow it. Now, today we're going to start talking about the heresy of recreational dating. And let me read something here that I wrote a while back, kind of as a way of introduction.

The practice of recreational dating is so far removed from Scripture that it's not even addressed. A lot of people will say, Brother Paul, I have a hard time, you know, where are the principles in the Scriptures with regard to dating? And I say, well, there aren't any. And there's really not.

It's not a biblical practice, at least the way it's done today. It is a recent phenomenon that is not only not found in Scripture, but is hardly found in the annals of human history. This is very important to understand.

You know, we're a product of our culture. And if we don't study history, we think that things have always been as they are today. And that's not necessarily true.

Young men, listen to me. Only just maybe one or two generations ago, young men just didn't walk up to a young girl and seek a relationship with her. You didn't do that independent of her family or independent of her father.

You didn't disregard the authorities in her life. I know it's common practice to do it today, even in many so-called Christian circles. As a matter of fact, if you were to even suggest to a young man that he was doing wrong by beginning to build a relationship with a young lady without talking to her father and mother, they would laugh at you.

They would think it was puritanical that you would even suggest such a thing. But you need to understand we're a product of our culture. And that even the unbelieving world just a few generations ago would have thought it appalling for a young man just to go up and address a young lady about some relationship without consulting her father or at least the authorities in her life.

Now, recreational dating is simply the product of a godless and lawless culture that is motivated by ignorance. You know, a lot of times I'll just say young people are in our church or visiting our church. Just recently some young college students had come to the church for the first time and I just walked up to them and I said, after kind of a lengthy conversation, I said, let me ask you a question.

If I were to ask each of you just to sit down right now and give me 20 minutes to teach me what the Bible says about relationships and particularly relationships with the opposite sex. How should they begin? How should they be initiated? What are the parameters of Scripture? How many of you could do that? And they all just kind of smiled and said, well, none of us. And I said, you're about, some of you already have, but some of you are about to embark on possibly the greatest journey of your life.

That of finding a mate and raising a family and you have no biblical principles whatsoever to stand on. You have to do what is right in your own eyes. I said, don't you think that's kind of dangerous? And of course they said yes.

I said, we need to turn this around. You need to be taught. Because the Bible does speak to this sort of thing.

Now, why do people just date? I mean, it's almost as if, you know, when someone turns a certain age, in my generation it was 16. Now it's, my goodness, what, nine? You know, I hear of kids and things, boyfriends and girlfriends and going out on dates and all sorts of things. And they're not even teenagers yet.

You know, why does this happen? Well, let me give you a few reasons that I think will be helpful. These are just a few. We can't exhaust the matter, but we'll look at some things that are important.

First of all, one of the reasons is to simply satisfy the lust of the flesh. And that is either in morality or simply entertainment, thrill-seeking. The idea of the newness of a relationship, of being with a person you've never been before, of experiencing certain things that have nothing to do with the will of God, but have everything to do with simply our fallen flesh and our desire to use other people to fulfill these lusts in our lives.

Now, if you're a Christian, be very, very careful. If you are a Christian, God has truly changed you. And there will be evidence of a crucified flesh.

But still, even the most genuine Christian, even the most mature Christian must struggle against such things as immorality. It's very dangerous. It's a trap that you do not want to get close to.

Because the closer you get to immorality, the more likely you will be to be drawn into it and trapped. So, one of the reasons why people date is just to satisfy the lust of the flesh. They want a thrill.

They want to experience something. Many times, the flesh exhibits itself by wanting to experience things that are strictly prohibited by the Word of God. And again, young person, how can you determine whether or not something is or is not the will of God? Only by renewing your mind in a daily study of the Word of God.

Now, another reason is not just to satisfy the lust of the flesh, but here's another reason, to satisfy heartfelt passions that may even be biblical, but not seeking them God's way. Let me give you an example. There is nothing wrong with a young man desiring the fellowship of a young woman.

That can be a wonderful thing. It can be a God-given desire. As a matter of fact, many of the things that we desire can be biblical.

But, if they're carried out in an unbiblical manner, they cease being biblical, they become immoral and dangerous. You want a relationship with a young lady, that's what you desire as a young man, that's wonderful. You're a young lady and you desire a relationship with a young man, equally wonderful.

There's nothing wrong with that. But, biblical passions must be fulfilled in a biblical manner or they cease being biblical and become extremely, extremely dangerous. Alright? Another reason is a consumer mentality.

And that is, in our country, you just have to test drive a whole lot of models before you find the one that you want. Or, as some would say, you have to kiss a lot of toads before you meet your prince. The problem is, you get a lot of warts on your face in the process.

None of this is biblical. None of it. Listen, you don't test drive relationships.

Because, when you test drive a car, unless your feet was dirty or the car was extremely dirty, you get out of it and both of you remain intact. The car remains the same. You remain the same.

That's not the way it is with a relationship. You cannot enter into a relationship with a person of the opposite sex without something being gained and something being lost. Without a part of you going to that person forever and a part of that person being brought to you.

Now, you need to understand this. Even in a relationship with the opposite sex, where there is no physical relationship, this still remains true. You enter into a guy-girl relationship and emotionally, there is going to be some binding.

There is going to be some unity. There is going to be some sharing. That if it's not fulfilled eventually in marriage, there is going to be some breaking.

Something going on there that is going to cause problems and could affect the rest of your life. Please understand me. It's not just that Christians need to avoid physical relationships and everything else is okay with the Bible.

That's not true. You enter into a relationship with a young girl, you may take a piece of her heart that will remain with you for the rest of your life. And she may have an emptiness in her that remains with her the rest of her life.

So it's not just that physical relationships are dangerous. Any sort of relationship with the opposite sex that tends towards the romantic of man and woman, it can have very, very dangerous, very harmful consequences. Please understand that.

Please, and again, do I need to repeat myself? Because I don't think a lot of times we take the matter at hand so seriously. It's not just the physical that can cause sin. A relationship in which two hearts are bound together in a certain way and yet do not remain that way, it will cause problems.

It will. So a consumer mentality, that's just not right. Another thing that's related to this is a lot of times young people will think in order to know whether or not this person is the person, there needs to be at least some physical contact because that will let me know whether or not we're that compatible.

Again, that is a lie. It's a lie and it's very, very dangerous. As a matter of fact, if two Christians come together, a young man and a young woman and they're both truly dedicated to the Lord, physical contact, if they fall into some sort of physical contact or physical relationship, it will not help them discern whether or not they should be married.

What it will do is bring confusion and it may actually ruin their relationship before it ever gets started. Let me give you an example. If you are a Christian, you know something of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit is working in you to convict you of sin.

Now, let's say that you're a young man and you really want to be godly and you've come into a relationship with this young lady that you think could be the lady that you need to marry. Now, you really are a Christian, but one night in one place where you shouldn't have been, you entered into some sort of physical relationship. Now, what happens? I'll tell you what happens.

You're convicted of sin. You are convicted of sin. And here's what will happen.

The young man will begin to think to himself, Man, look what I've done. I'm so ashamed. I was supposed to be leading her.

I was supposed to honor her father. And now I've done all this. And sometimes he'll just break off the relationship just in shame or the young lady will think to herself, You know, I wanted to be just a bondservant of Christ.

I wanted to be pure. I wanted to be all these things. And now I've allowed this to happen.

What does this young man think about me? You see, it doesn't promote the relationship. What it does is it destroys it. It causes great confusion.

Now, if something like that's happened in your life, it should be a tremendous wake-up call. And you should repent of it. But it shouldn't necessarily break the relationship.

God can restore things through repentance, through faith, through confession of sin. But you need to realize this is dangerous. It's extremely dangerous.

Now, so consumer mentality is just wrong. Let's go on. I think one of the biggest thing, because I'm talking to Christians here.

At least that's what this is directed toward. And I realize that when I say Christian, that's a very broad term. But I want you to know that I mean it biblically.

I'm not talking about someone who identifies themselves with Christ. I'm not talking about someone who goes to church, claims to be evangelical. Because many, many of those who claim to know Christ do not.

I'm talking about someone who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and is a new creature. And they truly are trusting in Christ. They're clinging to Christ.

And there is fruit of Christ's life in them. Many of such people, many people who sincerely love Christ, they are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. They simply do not know there was or is another alternative.

You know, Hosea 4.6, my people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. You know, back when I was a young man and I met my wife, Charo, by the grace of God, by the grace of God, we survived.

God protected us. But it was not because of knowledge. It was because of grace.

I can assure you. Because many of the things that I'm going to teach you, I did not know. No one taught these things back then.

And it was like the only alternative that you thought you had was do the same thing the world does, just be holy. Get in the same type of relationship. Put yourself in the same dangers, but be reading the Scriptures,

be praying and fear the Lord.

What I'm going to tell you is that's not true. Not only must you be reading the Scriptures and fear the Lord and you need to be praying. You need to be very, very careful.

But you also need to realize there are some things that are taught in the Scriptures that can protect us and keep us from danger. See, it's not wise to be reading the Word all the time and praying to be strong and then enter into areas that are dangerous and the Scriptures prohibit you from entering in. You need to be reading the Scriptures.

You need to be godly, but you also need to avoid things in a relationship that are extremely dangerous. Don't put yourself in that kind of situation. I'll give you an example.

Joseph. I don't want to take anything away from Joseph, but Joseph went into that house alone knowing that Potiphar's wife had an interest in him. Now, he is a very, very godly man.

He demonstrated that, but what I want you to see from this is if you know there's a danger, surround yourself with protection. Say, well, I've got to go into Potiphar's house. I've got to get something.

I need to take several people with me. I need to take somebody with me to protect me. Well, there's just not anybody, so I'm going to have to go alone.

No, don't go alone. Just don't go. If you can't do it right, don't go.

You say, well, you know, I just happened to be with her in this particular situation and there wasn't anybody there and we just had to keep going. No, you don't have to keep going. Remember, a wise man sees evil.

He sees danger. He turns off the path. You don't have to be tested to be tested in everything to be godly.

When you see something coming that is a test that could cause you to fall, turn away from it. Turn away from it. All right.

So sometimes dating is carried on because of a desire to satisfy the lust of the flesh. Sometimes it's just to satisfy heartfelt passions that may be biblical. A lot of times there's the idea of a consumer mentality.

And then many times we just practice these sort of things because we didn't know there was a biblical alternative or that there were biblical principles that deal with the matter. Now, what we're going to look at right now is a time for courtship. A time for courtship.

Now, what do I mean by that? The timing of courtship is often overlooked. When should a young man or woman begin to enter into a courtship relationship? When should they do it? Now, of course, I can't come to your house and tell you, you know, when is the hour and the time. There's so many circumstances.

And even if I knew you intimately, I would not be able to govern over your conscience in that way. But I can share with you a few biblical principles that may help you decide when is it time. Now, first of all, I want to talk about what I call the awakening.

When young people are awakened to the opposite sex. Now, I think this age of awakening because of the godlessness of our culture, it keeps getting lower and lower and lower. We've believed the lie that if we

keep our children ignorant of evil, then they won't be able to stand against it.

But that's a direct contradiction of Scripture. When it says that we are to be babes with regard to evil, we're to be innocent with regard to these things. Parents, listen to me.

There will come a time. But be very, very careful about that time. While your children are young, it is your task to protect their innocence.

Then as they grow older and they begin to ask questions, to answer those questions. Or if they're not asking the questions and yet you realize that it's time for them to be confronted with certain things, then you must bring up the matter and you must teach it appropriately. Teach it honorably.

Protect your children. Do not allow things about the physical relationship between a man and a woman be introduced to your children by someone else. Especially by other children.

Especially by the godless media of our age. You are not wise and cool because you're street wise. Because you know all the filth that everyone knows about.

You do not need these things in order to understand evil. To understand evil, you only need to understand who is Christ. And then as the light of Christ grows in you, everything that contradicts Him and His Gospel, that is contrary to the will of God, you will immediately recognize it as evil.

I always tell people, kind of give them a warning. Right now, I have two little boys and a little girl. My oldest is nine.

Then I have a seven year old and I have one that's about to be four. And I always tell them, someone came up one time and said to my son, you know, boy, you're a good looking young man, tall and I bet there's a lot of little girls like you. And I grabbed that man by the arm.

I turned him away from my son and I said, don't you ever, ever say that again to one of my children. My little boy, I think at the time he was seven or something, I said, my little boy is not to be awakened to those things. Right now, it's his job to think about traveling as an astronaut in the backyard, in his tree house, to be jumping on the trampoline, to be fighting imaginary dragons and to be doing all sorts of wonderful things as a child.

There'll be a time for his awakening, sir. And you're not the one to awaken him. I will protect him until I can see that the spirit of God in the natural course of things is awakening my son and my other son and my daughter to these matters.

You see, children can get so wrapped up in this type of thing when they don't have the maturity to handle it. Not only is that dangerous, but they miss out on all the other things of childhood, that innocence of childhood, that joy of childhood, that time of exploration and discovery and imagination and all these things. And then you're going to bring in all this other stuff that they've not been taught about.

They've not been trained in. They're not mature enough emotionally, spiritually or anything to deal with it. Don't do that.

Now, I've heard a lot of people say, well, you know, if you don't let them know some things, they'll just go out there and go wild one day. Well, there's some truth in that. I like to look at it this way.

I don't know who first came up with this, but I like to look at it this way. When we talk about disease, if I have a child and the moment that child is born, we put that child in a bubble in which there is no contamination whatsoever. There's nothing.

I mean, it's just all pristine, perfect, sheltered. Then whenever that child comes out of that bubble, he's going to die because he's not built up any of the resistance that is necessary to survive outside of the bubble. The other thing is, the other extreme, is that I could take my child and say, this is a very diseased world and we need to build up his immune system.

So I take him and I throw him down into raw sewage and have him live there. That will also kill him. What I need to do is this.

I myself, I need to be renewing my mind in the Word of God so that I know what God's will is. I myself, I need to study the book of Proverbs that I might be a wise man and I need to know when it is time to shelter and when it is time to pull back. Those things necessarily cannot be taught principle by principle.

It is wisdom given through the Word of God and by the Spirit of God and there is nothing you can put in the place of just the wisdom gained over the years by prayer and the Word of God in a man that is parenting. And so let's avoid both extremes but do not allow your child to be awakened to these matters before they should be awakened. Be very, very cautious especially since we live in a culture that wants to cram all these things down the throat or down the mind of your child almost from the very get-go.

It's unbelievable. But you must stand guard. You must watch your house.

And let me say this. Gentlemen, those of you who are fathers, it is not primarily the task of the mother to protect the children from these things. It is your task to do that.

And it's not just by watching over them and keeping bad people from them. It's also by teaching them and teaching them and teaching them the Word of God. You must do it.

Although the pastor and the elders and others can be a great benefit in all these things, sir, it is your responsibility to protect your child not only by being a shield, but by teaching them the truth in the Word of God. Now, it says, when young people are awakened to the opposite sex, it is not a sign to participate but a sign to begin preparation. Now, what do I mean by that? Let's say the little boy is 12 years old and dad, you begin to recognize that he begins to recognize that young girls are sugar and spice and everything nice.

He becomes interested in that. That is not a bad thing. What you need to recognize is that awakening at that moment is not a sign from God that this child needs to begin to participate in these things.

It's a sign from God that you need to ramp up your preparation. That time is getting short. This young boy has been awakened to something.

He will soon be out the door of your house. And so you need to begin to prepare him more than ever for manhood. You see, we've come to a point where media has done this.

If you ever look at media, you'll see that if there's some sort of television show or sitcom, it even started when I was a kid, the parents are always fools and the children always know better. And so we've developed this culture where when the child says, I'm ready, they're ready. When a child is awakened to

these things, since we no longer believe in a spiritual world or believe that there's a God or that we were created in the image of God but they were just animals driven by instinct, the moment that your child says, man, I like girls or your daughter says, man, I like this boy, you think it's time for them to begin to participate.

You haven't invested anything in them prior to that time and don't plan on investing anything before they initiate the relationship. And then we wonder why are things falling apart? It's absurd. When your young boy or your daughter begins to be awakened to these things, don't treat it prudishly as some horrid thing that's happened.

It's a wonderful thing that has happened. But say now more than ever because you've come to light on this matter and you're growing to maturity, you and I must spend more time together, more time in God's Word so that we can begin to understand exactly how you should begin all of this. And fathers, let me share something with you.

Since my boys were little, we've talked about marriage. Now, they don't understand the ins and outs of all these things, but we've talked about marriage. Would they know that one day they will leave our house and they will unite hopefully with a godly, godly woman and they'll have a family of their own.

Now, they still think that those children somehow are going to just pop out from under rocks and things, but they have an idea that one day they're going to enter into a relationship with a young lady. And they're told they're not supposed to giggle about that. They're told they're not supposed to make faces.

They're told to act like men, that this is a good thing. And then I explain to them over and over, this is the way you treat a young lady. This is the way you should be around them.

This is the way you should protect them, honor them, honor their parents, things like that, you see. But they know. They're even told, look, you need to pray for your future wife.

You do. And I also tell them they need to pray for their future in-laws because you can get a very good spouse and some very rough in-laws, so it's good to be praying for them too. But encourage your children that they should see in your marriage that marriage is a good thing and it's something that they will one day do.

And they have to do it right. Now, so when a child begins to ask questions, we should rejoice in that. We should handle it very, very carefully.

But it doesn't mean it's time for them to participate, but a time for them to prepare. To prepare. Now, I want to talk about the lie of adolescence.

And it is a lie. The lie of adolescence. Let me just read what I've written here.

Adolescence is usually defined as that stage between childhood and adulthood when a young person is discovering his or her identity and asserting his or her independence. It is the invention of evolutionary thought and is one of the greatest obstacles to a child's growth to adulthood. And I stand by that.

I don't see in the Scriptures this idea of adolescence, this time between a boy and a man, and especially this time when a boy needs to begin to assert his authority, which is basically a nice way of talking about rebellion. Now, like in all things, there are horrible extremes. There are people who would agree with

everything I've said, but then they're still treating their 18-year-old son like he was three.

And that's absolutely absurd. We want our children to grow, to mature. We want them to learn to think independently using Scripture, using logic.

We want to teach them the wisdom of God's Word. We want them to grow. But here's the problem with adolescence.

First of all, in the Scriptures, and this may be a little bit humorous, but in the Scriptures, you're either a boy or a man. Now, I'm aware of texts that talk about youth and all sorts of things like that, but it has nothing to do with our modern-day idea of adolescence. Now, we say that... Well, if I was to walk into a room with, let's say, 12 young men are there.

Let's say that they're 14 to 17. And I said, hello, boys. Or I said to one of them, boy, come here.

I mean, they'd get all up about it, wouldn't they? Who are you calling a boy? But my next question would be to them, well, what do I call you? Are you a man? Are you a mature man? Well, if you're not a boy and you're not a man, what are you? Well, I'm adolescent. Well, what does that mean? What adolescence has basically come to mean is this. It's when a young man basically says, I have the right to all the privileges of manhood without the need or the demand to assume the responsibilities of manhood.

I have the right to all these privileges without training myself to use them wisely, without working for it, without having to grow in character, grow in knowledge, grow in responsibility. No, I demand to have all the privileges of manhood even though I don't assume the responsibilities of manhood. That is terrible.

But that's what's happened. A young guy gets 15 years old and he demands to be able to be in a relationship with a young girl. Yet is he able to assume the responsibilities of that relationship? For the most part, no.

Not at all. And then what we end up having out there is we have a bunch of boys who are 35 years old and still adolescent. They're doing the things that are privileges of manhood, but they still have the level of responsibility of a 13-year-old.

You see, that goes back to a child being awakened and then preparing. It's not that, oh, you're a certain age right now, so now you can assume all the privileges of a man. No.

Those privileges are earned. Do you have the character? Do you have the knowledge? Do you have the wisdom? Have you grown into something of a mature man? If not, then you have no right to the privileges of a mature man. We have all these little boys out there sticking their chests out, demanding all sorts of things that pertain only to men, and yet they're not men.

Which is one of the things that we're going to learn. One of the signs that it is time for you to participate in any sort of relationship with a young lady is that you have grown into a man. You are assuming the responsibilities of a man.

Now, I want to look at a few things. The result of adolescence. I've already talked about this, but it's in my notes, so I want to read it again for emphasis.

A youth passes to adolescence where he or she is allowed to participate in the privileges of adulthood without being required to assume the responsibilities of adulthood. Man, that is dangerous. Let me give

you an example.

Sometimes I have time to, not so much anymore, but I used to hunt a lot more, deer hunt and turkey hunt, and I like to do it with a longbow. Now, longbows are very long, and they're very slow compared to a modern-day bow. And because of that, the arrow comes off at maybe 180 feet per second or something off the string rather than like a modern bow, 315 feet per second.

Now, because of that, because my arrow travels a lot slower, my broadhead or the point on the end of the arrow, it has to be extremely sharp. They even have what's called a broadhead wrench so that you can put your broadheads on without touching them because they're like razors. Well, now, my little boys, they go out and they shoot with me, but they've never had a broadhead on one of their arrows.

Why? Those broadheads are dangerous for a man. I've been hunting and shooting bows for years, but always when I pull those things out and start putting them, gluing them on the end of a wooden shaft or screwing them onto an aluminum shaft, man, I'm very, very cautious. You stab yourself in the leg, cut your wrist, I mean, they're like razors.

My little boys are not going to use those. Not now. Why? Because they're not able to handle them.

Now, my oldest son, he's almost nine years old and he can even pull back one of my bows. So he's got the muscle to do it, but he doesn't have the skill and the wisdom to know how dangerous these things really are. You see, it's the same way.

Relationships are absolutely wonderful. They're gifts from God. They're also extremely, extremely dangerous.

And you don't put something like that in the hand of a child, even if that child is 35 years old. Because a lot of people are going to get hurt. Now, what are some of the dangers of adolescence? As I said, the immature youth is allowed to participate in activities that require adult maturity in order to avoid serious harm.

A second thing, there is little or no motivation for the youth to mature to adulthood. Now, think about that. A boy turns 13, 14 years old and thinks he ought to be able to have a girlfriend, establish a relationship, do all sorts of things.

And his parents give in to him or give in to the culture. He never goes through a training process. He's never taught.

He's never prepared. He never has something to work towards as a goal or a prize. It's his by right of birth or something.

No, absolutely not. And so the child never grows to maturity. Now, you take a child and they've awakened to these things.

Say 13 years old and they're like, wow, Dad, I never knew. And I say, well, welcome to the world, son. She is beautiful.

You're right. She is very pleasant. She is very charming.

Well, Dad, I would like one day to be married. Well, wonderful, son. I'd like you to be married.

Son, to take care of something that precious, not only is she precious, she's precious to her father. She's precious to her mother. She's precious to her God.

Before something like that, that precious can be put in your hands, you're going to have to prove yourself. You're going to have to prove yourself. Now, you know, I've heard that in some of the African tribes, a young man would have to go out in order to enter into manhood and kill a lion barehanded.

Well, that's probably not going to happen, but I'm a father of a little girl that's very precious to me and I've thought about telling young guys if you want to court her, you're going to have to go out and kill a lion barehanded. I don't think she'd have many opportunities to marry if I did that. But the fact of the matter is, young boys, listen to me.

You earn this right. You knock on my door and you're just a little boy. I'm going to tell you to come back after several years when you're a man.

When you're a man. Let me ask you, young person. Maybe you're 13, 14, you're listening to this.

Maybe you're 21. Let me ask you, how much preparation have you had in manhood? Do you think that this kind of comes on you? Or you were born with an innate knowledge of the right thing to do? How many of you young men are thinking to yourself, God is one day going to put into my hand a most precious treasure that I need to know how to handle? To care for? I need to grow in character. I need to grow in wisdom, Christ-likeness, the knowledge of God.

You see, no one talks like this anymore. And that's why we've got the problem that we have. We need to.

We need to. Some of you young men have played baseball and basketball ever since you were tiny. And you were always preparing for a dream.

You know, you're going to play pro or something, you know. Always preparing. You're preparing for a career.

You're preparing for all sorts of things. Has anyone ever stopped and wondered that you can have all the preparation in the world for a career, but if you don't have the character of a godly man, none of it matters? Something to think about, isn't it? And fathers, listen to me. It's not just teaching them principles of marriage or principles of courtship.

It's teaching them the Scriptures. It's praying that by God's grace they be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They become Christians and they grow in Christ-like character.

Because a person who has Christ-like character and yet may be unaware of many of the principles of Scripture will still do better than a man who knows all the principles and has no character. Well, that's our admonition. Now, let's go on.

I want us to look at something that's extremely important here. In the time of courtship, we've talked about the awakening. We've talked about the lie of adolescence.

And I want to talk about an indispensable first truth. Both the young man and woman must grasp the ultimate divine purpose for marriage. They must move beyond mere romance to biblical reality.

In discerning whether or not it is time for marriage, there's a question that's very important. Does that person realize, first of all, that marriage is to be, first and foremost, for the glory of God? That they are marrying not to satisfy lust. They are marrying not to even satisfy godly desires.

They are not marrying for companionship. They are marrying for God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom. Now, remember, it says in 1 Corinthians 10, 31, whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.

Young man, can you honestly say, I'm pursuing this principally. My main, my foundational reason is that I believe this will glorify God. Now, here we need to be careful.

I don't want you to be super spiritual. What do I mean by that? Sometimes young guys will come up to me and say, you know, I feel like that it's God's purpose, it's God's will and to God's glory that I marry this girl. And I'll go, well, praise God.

Do you love her? Do you think she's beautiful? Well, Brother Paul, what really matters is the glory of God. And I say, what really matters first of all is the glory of God. But there are a lot of other things that matter.

Not only do you feel it is like God's glory, do you rejoice in that? Are you attracted to her? Are you attracted to Him if you're a young lady? Do you delight in this? Do you have great hope about it? Let me just put it, are you wild about this person? Do you care for them deeply? Do you want to spend the rest of your life with them? So I just wanted to say that because I don't want us to get over here and be just overly unbiblical in our spirituality saying it's all about the glory of God. It is, but there are other things that attach themselves to that glory and that purpose. Never forget that.

If God's called you to marry this person, He'll also create in you a deep and abiding desire to be with them, to help them, to bless them. Now, so we are to marry for the glory of God and we are to marry for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. You know, the heart of Jesus Christ is revealed in Matthew 6, 9-10 where He says, Pray then in this way, Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, the advancement of God's kingdom.

Will His kingdom advance through this union of you and this young lady? This is very, very important. And we can look at it not just kind of cosmologically about the whole big picture, but we can also look at it individually and personally. Does this relationship that I have with this girl or this relationship that a girl has with a guy, does it advance the working of Christ in them? You know, I'm to witness to all sorts of people.

I'm to be in the world and not of it. But I'm also warned that if I get into a relationship with an unbeliever that begins to carry undue influence in me, bad influence, that I'm to break off from that. I am to protect myself from that evil influence.

Well, one of the things that I want you to see is that in entering into a relationship with a person, you have to ask yourself, does this relationship lead to greater godliness in my life? Or is this person a stumbling block to godliness in my life? Now, guys, especially you guys who may be thinking about being preachers and missionaries, you need to be careful here. Why? When I went to Peru, I was a single missionary and just lived by myself. And man, I was godly.

I could read the Bible hours a day and I could pray and fast and go up and down the mountains preaching the gospel. Man, it just seemed easy. I just thought, man, I'm spiritual.

I'm living for Jesus, you know. But when I married, here's something that's very interesting. God has used the marriage from day one to make me more godly.

But marriage, a relationship, also exposed how ungodly, how immature, how fleshly that I could be. You see, when you're single or you're off here just running around the mountains preaching the gospel in the Andes, it's really easy to be spiritual. But you enter into a relationship, especially the relationship with marriage, it is going to reveal in your life many of the weaknesses you did not think was there.

And so when I tell you that one of the evidences that you need to marry a certain person is that it advances godliness in your life, it won't always look that way. Sometimes that relationship you enter into will expose the ungodliness in your life and give you an opportunity to repent of it. But know this, and you do know the difference.

If it's God's will for you to enter into that relationship, it will advance the cause of Christ in you and not create a stumbling block. If this person is drawing you away from Christ, you need to have some serious doubts about what's going on. So we do it for the glory of God.

We do it for the advancement also of Christ's kingdom. Now, one of the things that you've got to realize is that marriage is not just about a wedding. It's about what happens after the wedding.

A life together. And you know as Christians you are called to minister. Now exactly how you are called to minister, that opens us up to a variety of things.

The Holy Spirit has gifted you and called you to do something. But you need to realize that whether you're a missionary or a pastor or a policeman or a janitor or a doctor, you will be in that ministry and your mate will have a tremendous impact on your usefulness to God. And you need to be very, very careful about this.

You need to be thinking about marrying a person who will complement what God has called you to do. Who will help you in that. That doesn't mean the person will be perfect and it doesn't mean the person will look like they fit all the time.

And it doesn't even mean it will look like they were the right person to marry in order to promote the certain ministry that God has given you. But in wisdom you look at it and you realize this is a godly person who has the same desires to please God, to glorify God, to minister in Christ's name. This person, if you're a young man, listen to me.

You want to marry a young lady who realizes that her husband has a calling and she has to help him fulfill that calling. She has to be a helpmeet to him. But at the same time, guys, now don't think that your wife or your future wife is just going to be an extension of you.

That she exists in order to just carry out your ministry and just to help you. Now principally, she will be your helpmeet, but you are also to help her because she is a Christian, a child of God in her own right. And there are things that God will give her to do.

And you need to be mindful of that and you need to promote that and you need to bless that and help that. This is very, very important. She's not an extension of you.

She is called to be your helpmeet. She is called to enter into the ministry that God has given you. But do not think that she hasn't been given unique gifts that can be used for specific purposes that God has given her.

That's very, very important. Extremely important. So it's going to be to the glory of God.

It's going to be to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. And also this relationship, and we've already talked about this a bit, the relationship will promote the conformity of Christ in your life. Now, we're going to cut off here for just a moment.

And when we come back, I want to talk about that just a little bit more. I would have liked to have finished this part, but the conformity to Christ thing is so big that we'll just take a break. And in the next session, we'll come back and talk about this for just a moment.

And I think it'll be especially helpful in those first years after the courtship is over and you've married. This may help you in some of the rough things that you'll probably go through. So God bless you until I see you again or you see me again in the next session.

God's blessing. Because we are privileged to serve.

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