

Biblical Courtship Session #5 - God's Purpose for Marriage

by Paul Washer

The purpose of marriage is to have an opportunity to lay down one's life in service to take care of a daughter of God, and to be conformed to the image of Christ through the obstacles and difficulties of marriage.

Duration: 23:24

Scripture: Matthew 10:30, Romans 8:29, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 7:17, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 4:12-13

Topics: "Biblical Courtship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of wanting what God wants and being conformed to the image of Christ. He explains that conformity to Christ is a lifelong process that involves God's work through His Spirit and Word. The preacher also highlights God's providence in orchestrating events in our lives to conform us to Christ's image. He uses the example of a young man who is called to preach but also has a woman in his life, emphasizing the cost and beauty of conforming to Christ. Additionally, the preacher discusses the need to protect children's innocence and allow them to be children, as well as the purpose of marriage in serving and caring for one another. The sermon concludes by mentioning the importance of preparing oneself to be a godly husband and father and the call for all believers to minister in Christ's name for the advancement of His kingdom.

Transcript

All right, we're going to continue our study on biblical courtship. In the last session, we talked some about the time of courtship, when should it begin, and we talked about the need to protect our children and their innocence, and to allow them to be raised without having to think in their early years about all these things that come with relationships and with the opposite sex. We need to protect their innocence and allow children to be children.

As I like to say, our little boys ought to be thinking about fighting dragons and building tree houses and things like that. It's a tragedy that so many young children are already involved, you know, eight and nine and ten years old, thinking about relationships and boys and girls and girlfriends and boyfriends and even things much more profound with regard to physical intimacy. It's very dangerous and it's not healthy.

But there is a time when God will awaken a child to the reality of the opposite sex. It is a wonderful thing, but it is a thing which we must guard, we must protect. Also, we need to always be in our children's lives, teaching them the Word of God and afterwards instructing them in these matters such as courtship and relationships with the opposite sex.

We need to be instructing them in the Word of God. Now we talked about adolescence, how it was just a lie, and that young men, you need to understand, you're either a boy or you are a man. And if you desire to be a man, you aspire to a good thing, you need to grow in Christ-likeness, character, knowledge of God, knowledge of Christ, in all the things that the Scriptures consider to be virtues.

You need to work very hard to prepare yourself to be a godly husband and a godly father. Also, we talked about an indispensable first truth, which is why do we enter into a relationship with the opposite sex? Why do we marry? Primarily, it is always, everything we do, whether we eat or drink, it's for the glory of God. Another thing that we need to think about is the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

And that has to do with each and every one of us is called to minister in Christ's name. We're called to be a part of the Great Commission. That marriage should be something that doesn't bring a hindrance to that commission, but that advances it.

We need to marry someone who is like-minded in the purpose for their life. Someone who desires to be used of God in the fullest way imaginable. Now, we talked about marriage for the glory of God, the advancement of Christ's kingdom, but now I want to take kind of an extended time here.

We may just do a short session on conformity to Christ. One of the greatest purposes of marriage is our conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. Now, please understand this.

Let's look at Romans 8.29. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. He predestined us before the foundation of the world. His purpose in saving us was not simply to justify us, but to perfect us, to conform us to the image of Christ.

The thing that we ought to be chasing, as much as anything in this world, is not great ministry or great usefulness, but great conformity to the image of Christ, because if we are conformed to Christ, we will be useful. We will be apt for the ministry. God will be able to take us and do things with our lives.

The great purpose of God in the soul of a man is to conform him in character to the image of Christ. Now, God does that in many, many ways. He does it through the scriptures, through prayer, through providence, and works of trials and experiences in our lives.

But one of the greatest means of being conformed to the image of Christ is marriage. And this should be one of the great foundations of our marriage. Now, let's go through a few things.

A young man comes into my office, and he's all starry-eyed, and he says that he's found the girl and he wants to marry her. And I'll always ask them, I'll say, now, why do you want to marry this girl? And many times they'll say, well, you know, she's beautiful, and I want to be with her, and when I'm with her, I feel good, and we can talk, and she meets all my needs, and just goes on and on and on, and I'll sit there and I'll listen. And when he's finished, I'll say, okay, let me see if I understand you.

You want to marry this girl because she meets all your self-centered, selfish desires. And the young man will usually look kind of shocked, and he'll say, no, that's not what I mean. And I'll say, but that's what you said.

You see, you want to marry her, she's beautiful, well, that's wonderful. What happens when she's not beautiful anymore? Or what happens when someone comes along who is more beautiful than she is? What are you going to do? Are you going to be like most men in our country who leave her? You want to be with her because you can really talk. What happens when you can't talk anymore? Or what happens when you find someone else that you can have better conversations with? What are you going to do? She completes you.

What are you going to do if someone comes around that completes you better than she does? And these types of things will happen. What are you going to do? If this is the basis of marriage, then we're in trouble. And that's why we see many people in the West who are in a great deal of trouble.

Why? They married for all the wrong reasons. Now, I want us to look at something. I love my wife, and I think she's beautiful, and I'm a very blessed man.

But that's not the foundation of our marriage. The foundation of our marriage, I believe, is a calling. You know, I was called many years ago to be a preacher.

I guess some would debate that, but I believe it is so, that God called me to be a preacher. I also believe, kind of old school, that it's not just an option or a door that happened to be open or something that had to do with my gifts. I honestly believe that God called me to preach.

He laid that task, that doom, upon me to preach, and I cannot free myself from it. It's irrevocable. It's not something that I can make a career change about.

It's something God lays upon a man, and it's to be his calling. What he does, he lives, he breathes it. It's God-ordained.

Now, I look at marriage. The foundation of it is this. God called me with an irrevocable calling to care for a certain daughter of his, to lay down my life for her.

Now, I want you to see the strength of this. Let's say she's beautiful. Praise the Lord.

I'm staying in the marriage. Let's say that some disease ravishes her body, or she's in a tragic accident, and she is paralyzed, she's deformed, she is a vegetable. I'm not going anywhere.

Why? Because the foundation of the marriage is not, I want to marry her because she's beautiful. The foundation of the marriage is, God has called me with an irrevocable calling to lay down my life for this specific daughter. Not for many daughters.

For one daughter. My wife. And that is my task.

Now, let's say that we're able to converse and just have wonderful conversations. Wow, I'm staying in the marriage. Let's say that we are not.

That we pass through a time in our life when communication is difficult, it doesn't seem like we have much in common. What do we do? Well, if the foundation of our marriage is our desires to be completed and be

fulfilled and all sorts of things, we're going to leave the marriage. But if I know that I'm called of God to lay down my life for this girl, when she's beautiful or not so beautiful, when she's easy to be with and when she's very difficult to be with, that I'm called to remain steadfast.

That changes everything. You see, there comes a time in your life when you have to make a decision. What do you really want? Do you want what God wants? Most people in this world really do not want what God wants.

They do not want conformity to Christ unless they can get it by just simply being zapped at some evangelistic meeting. Conformity to Christ is a lifetime process in which God is working through His Spirit and His Word to change us. God's providence is also greatly involved in our being conformed to the image of Christ.

God organizes, He arranges, orchestrates everything that happens in our life with a sole purpose, and that is to conform us to the image of Christ. And that's why the Christian's purpose should never wane. Let me give you an example.

Let's say that a young man is preaching and God's power is on his life and God's using him to touch nations and all sorts of marvelous things are happening. He senses God's purpose. Let's say all of a sudden that he's cut down with a devastating, debilitating disease.

He can hardly open up his mouth. He cannot stand in the pulpit. He cannot write.

You sit there and go, there's no purpose in this. What a tragedy. That is absolutely absurd.

It is against Scripture, that type of thinking. You see, God is sovereign. There was a purpose in Him being used to touch nations.

There is a purpose now in Him being cut down and silenced. You see, if we believe in the absolute sovereignty of God, then man, we are strong in purpose. We realize that this is exactly what that young man needed to be conformed to the image of Christ.

It is exactly what the world needed, you see. Now, let's say that you marry a person that is just wonderful. Okay, I mean everything, in absolutely everything.

Well, I suppose that's what you needed at that time. But let's say that you marry, seeking God's will with all your heart, and you find out that maybe at this present moment the girl is not quite as like-minded as you thought. We can say the same thing for the husband.

Or maybe her personality is difficult to bear with. That there are problems that she presents that even seems to limit your ministry and your usefulness to the Lord. Again, I can tell you this.

The God of heaven knows exactly what you need. The devil and also well-meaning Christians would oftentimes say that, well, you just must have made a mistake. My dear friend, know this.

We do not believe in fatalism, but we believe in an all-sovereign God. Every hair of your head is numbered. Everything has a purpose in it.

In marriage, you may marry someone that actually causes some hindrance to your ministry. But what you need to realize is God doesn't care about your ministry as much as He cares about your conformity to the

image of Christ. So God is going to use that.

That's what you need. One of the things that's helped me through my life, even though I've strayed from it and many times have been overcome by sadness and grief, is that God knows what I need to be conformed to the image of Christ. He knows the spouse that you need to be conformed to the image of Christ.

He does. I look at it this way. God has given you or will give you a wife who will be strong in all the areas where she must be strong so that you are not tempted beyond what you can bear.

I also believe God will give you a wife with specifically orchestrated weaknesses that will be weaknesses sometimes in the very area where you most wanted her to be strong. And why will He do that? Because He hates you? No, that's not why. Here's the reason.

Conformity to the image of Christ. To be like Jesus. Now when you think about Jesus, what do you think about? Do you think about wrath and judgment and all these sorts of things? No, when I think about Jesus, I think about unconditional love, mercy and grace.

A man conformed to the image of Christ will be a man who manifests unconditional love, mercy and grace. Now, I have a question for you. How can you learn unconditional love through your marriage? If you're married to a woman who meets all your conditions.

How can you learn mercy and pity if you're married to a person who never fails? How can you learn to be a man of grace if you're married to a wife who never falters? Now think about that. Think about that. You see, young man, when you get married, if you're a Christian, you are not going to marry a woman who completes you.

You're not going to marry a woman who fulfills you. I'm sorry, I guess I'm here on camera saying a lot of Christian books are wrong. They are.

You see, I have a wife that I love and she loves me and she's far better than anything I could have ever deserved. But she doesn't complete me and she doesn't fulfill me. You see, I'm a Christian.

And the Spirit of God, God himself, zealously desires me. There's only one who can fulfill you. And that's Christ.

There's only one who can complete you, who has completed you, and that is Christ. And one of the great problems with people who think about marriage is they think that this person is just going to fulfill me. This person is going to complete me.

If this person does, you could be lost and without Christ. You see, God jealously guards you. If you're a Christian, he will not let your wife become everything to you.

He will not let your husband be everything so that you're totally and completely filled in him. He will not allow that. And to look for that is wrong, is to put something on your mate that they were never created to give you and also to demand something that is going to be a cause for failure.

My wife is such a blessing to me and I hope that I'm half the blessing to her that she is to me. But I want you to see something. She's not this perfect person brought into my life that makes everything absolutely wonderful all the time.

She's not this person who completes me and I need nothing else because of her. If that was the case, then my standard would be very, very low and I would be a man who did not know Christ. You see that? If you are a Christian, only Christ can fulfill you.

And the goal is to be conformed to the image of Christ. So God will use the blessings and the virtues of your wife to conform you to the image of Christ. But God will also use those problem areas in your wife even more so to conform you to the image of Christ.

And for you young ladies that may be listening, the same is for you. God will give you the husband that you need. Now, here again is the question.

What do you want? And be careful how you answer. You know, the greatest judgment that fell upon the Pharisees is that God gave them exactly what they wanted. He gave them the desires of their heart.

They wanted the glory of men. God gave it to them. God gave them their reward in full and then they went to hell.

You want an easy life? Be careful what you desire because God may give it to you. And it may be an indication not of His blessing but of His curse. What do you want? An easy life or conformity to Christ? What do you want? Do you want a perfect mate that you do not have to serve? That you do not have to be merciful to or unconditionally love because they're perfect? Or do you want a mate that is going to require of thee to be like Christ? To be like Christ.

Now, please do not think that I'm being just morbid about this point. Marriage is a wonderful, wonderful thing. But there's an aspect about marriage that is rarely taught.

That it's the obstacles of marriage and the difficulties of marriage that produces the greatest conformity to Christ in our lives. So why do you want to be married? You need to marry her because God has called you to lay down your life for this one woman above all other people, even your children. Something, guys, that you need to know.

On the day of your marriage when you say yes to her, realize that you're also giving an answer to the rest of the world. And the answer is no. When you say yes to that girl, you're saying no to every other girl in your life.

Now, don't write me hate mail for what I'm about to say, guys. But in a sense, you're also saying no to even your own mother. Now, should you honor your mother? Absolutely.

Should you bless her and serve her? Yes. But she is no longer the number one person in your life. She is no longer the woman in your life.

And mothers, listen to me. It's a very important truth. When that son of yours says yes to her, he's breaking away from his mother and his father.

And he's joining himself to another and becoming another family unit. Now, you ought to be able to expect long years of friendship. But he has a woman in his life now who is the first person in his life, humanly speaking.

All right. So, young guys, do you want to be conformed to the image of Christ? Do you? Well, it's costly. It's costly.

It's more terrible than you could ever imagine. And it's more marvelous than you could ever imagine. Okay.

So, this is the purpose of marriage. For you to have an opportunity to lay down your life in service. In service to take care of that daughter of God.

All right. Well, in the next session, we're going to... I told you it was going to be a short session. You probably didn't believe me.

But in the next session, we're going to talk about the specific when of courtship. When does it begin? What does a young man need to be? All right. Well, God bless you.

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