

Social Relationships

by Stephen Olford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christian friendship and the need to navigate social relationships in a way that is pleasing to God.

Duration: 1:03:46

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Romans 8:9, Romans 14:4, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

Topics: "Christian Relationships", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the topic of social relationships, particularly focusing on the challenges and complexities of sex relationships. The speaker emphasizes the importance of sanctification and honor in Christian and social relationships. He highlights three characteristics of friendship that should be considered: understanding, possessiveness, and overreaching. The speaker warns against exceeding the laws of chastity and holiness, sharing a distressing example of immorality in a Christian school. He urges young people to heed God's word and avoid behavior that will lead to judgment.

Transcript

This is not an address in the sense in which I bring an address at chapel hours. A theme clearly thought out, driving to a target. This is something I just want to share with you in a conversational way.

And I want to say some very straight things, direct things. I want to touch on some very delicate matters. I also want to say some very simple and matter-of-fact things regarding what I'm calling in a general way, social relationships.

Social relationships. Now once again, let's just lift our hearts to the Lord. Dear Lord, in this precious, delicate subject, grant us the wisdom to speak, and grant us the grace to listen, and to apply the principles to our own lives, that we shall have many solutions here to problems and perplexities which have obtained thus far.

Lead us through into the liberty of the spirit, in this matter, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Before I branch right into the subject, I just want to pause to say this.

I'm talking as a young man. I'm thinking through your mind, largely, looking through your eyes, speaking through your lips, feeling through your heart. I'm not speaking as a Dutch uncle.

I'm not speaking as an old grandfather. I'm speaking as a young man, who has faced some of the problems that many of you are facing here. And as a pastor, and as a young minister in my own church, and in convention work, conference work, and even evangelistic work, I'm up against this whole problem of sex relationships, social relationships, perhaps more than any one other problem.

And I want to say the reason I'm speaking on this subject tonight is because so many have asked me to speak on it, not because I've elected to speak on it. It's been a request from faculty and students. And I'm also speaking on this subject because one day you're going to be on the mission field, one day you're going to be an evangelist, one day you're going to be a youth leader, one day you're going to have your pastoral sessions in your own church.

And if you haven't an answer in relation to this matter, then quit the ministry altogether, get back home and sell bananas. And I mean that. Don't you face the ministry if you haven't a complete answer before God is touching your sex life.

What's shaken and shattered me is to know of ministers, brother ministers, men I've known who've completely collapsed and broken down in relation to morality and sex life, and more ministers still who can stand up in the platform and have no answer to an audience who are crying out in defeat and frustration in relation to this very matter. And so I say, it isn't just for your sake, it's for those to whom you're going to minister in coming days. Well now, time's going, so let's just branch right into it.

And I want to take it very simply, and I may have to go back over ground again and again in order to make myself quite clear. Among the many gifts which the Lord Jesus has given to his people, perhaps Christian friendship, as I'm calling it tonight, Christian friendship is the sweetest and most precious. The truth of that statement is better experienced than explained.

For I can't tell you what a friendship means in my life, and you can't tell me. It's too deep, it's too precious, too wonderful to either paint or even describe. It's just something inward, but it's one of those precious gifts that God has given to mankind and especially to the Christian Church.

No one can tell the sublime heights to which friendship can go. If it's maintained, listen carefully, in sanctification and honor. Sanctification and honor.

That's the little rephrase of the movement of music throughout this whole message this evening. Sanctification and honor. Now within the scope of Christian and social relationships, there are three characteristics of friendship that I think we ought to consider tonight.

I would like to go broader than that, but I've got to limit myself. Three characteristics of friendship. I'm going to call it, one, Christian comradeship, secondly, Christian companionship, and thirdly, Christian courtship.

And all those three are quite different, though they have a lot in common. Now let's look at the first one, Christian comradeship. The word comradeship means one who shares a rule.

That's just what the word means. It's used of soldiers who share the same barrack rule. It's a strong word, it's a rugged word, but it's a good word.

Christian comradeship. Now this is the sort of friendship, young people, this is the sort of friendship which usually exists between people of the same sex. Two fellows, two girls, two men, two women.

I suppose the best Bible illustration of this friendship is the friendship that existed between who? David and Jonathan. Amen. Dead right.

They could talk about their souls, if you read the story, being knit together. Their souls knit together. And you know that friendship went right on through their lives, until the tragic death of Jonathan.

There was never a break in the friendship. Whatever the situation was in relation to the father Saul, whatever vicissitudes of life through which they passed, that friendship never stopped. It was a glorious friendship.

Sometimes we go to that very story to illustrate the friendship of the Lord Jesus with our souls. It's a beautiful story of the Old Testament. And you know, when Jonathan was killed in battle, David mourned the death of his friend.

Oh, David wept. David put sackcloth upon his body. And you remember that lament which is recorded for us in 2 Samuel 1, 26? He says this concerning Jonathan.

He looks back upon that comradeship with that young man Jonathan, and he says, Jonathan, thy love to me, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. That was David's comment on a life of friendship with Jonathan. Christian comradeship.

I could pause to illustrate that in contemporary life. Have you ever heard the two names over here of Mildred Cable and Francisca French? Two wonderful lady missionaries who broke into the Tibetan border. Mildred Cable and Francisca French.

Mildred Cable has gone to glory. But those two were absolutely welded together. Two women.

I think of two friendships in my own experience so far as a young man looking on. That was the friendship of my father, Fred Ulford, with his colleague Leonard Gammon. Mr. Gammon, the father of Philip Gammon, that some of you know here at Moody Bible Institute, or did know.

Phil Gammon. There was a friendship that nothing could break. It was wonderful as a lad to watch the friendship of Len Gammon and Fred Ulford.

They knew each other. They had integrated their personalities into each other. And it was just wonderful.

They could scrap together and still love one another. They could pray together. They could face situations together.

They could utterly disagree and still love one another. That was the friendship of Christian comradeship. Well, now that's a wonderful friendship.

And God has given it to us. And if God ever gives you a comrade like that, praise God. And you know that you can have a comrade.

You can have a comrade like that and still have other friends and be sociable with them. You can have a comrade like that and still have a very happy, perfectly natural married life. And still have a comrade.

My father had his wife, or I wouldn't be here. And I can speak of a most harmonious, happy, glorious Christian home. And yet my father had a wonderful comrade in Leonard Gammon.

Well, I needn't dwell on that. You can see that, don't you? That's the first aspect of friendship. Praise God for every one of you who'll have a comrade on the mission field.

Praise God for every one of you who'll have a comrade in your past script. Praise God for every one of you who'll have a comrade through life. And it started perhaps here, welded here at Bible School Institute.

And you'll write to each other, and you'll meet one another at alumni conferences. And by and by, you'll be separated perhaps by continents, but you'll still keep in touch because it's a glorious comradeship. It's a wonderful thing.

Then there is another aspect of Christian friendship which I'm going to deal with. And this one, I'll have to weigh on for a few moments. It's what I'm calling Christian companionship.

This is a little different. The word means one who accompanies another. This is an aspect of friendship which is not so limited as Christian comradeship.

It can be enjoyed without distinction of sex. It is attention to one another without intention on any particular one. I hope you got that.

It is attention to one another without intention on any particular one. Companionship is a word which includes the whole friendship of the fellowship of the Christian Church. Now then, here's where the snag comes.

It is in relation to such companionship that Paul says certain guiding principles in this chapter of 1 Thessalonians 4. He says it must be preserved in sanctification and honor. That is, sanctification separated unto God and honorable before men. And this sort of friendship involves the discipline of sex appetite and sex appeal.

And I'm going to tell you that even though God has given us this wonderful friendship called companionship within the Christian Church, it exists here at Moody as a student body, it'll exist wherever you go throughout the world, wherever there are Christians, you'll find companions. Though it's such a precious gift, do you know it can be prostituted? Do you know within that very wonderful friendship horrible things can happen? And that's where the guiding principles of the Apostle Paul come in, for he says, remember, because you've become a Christian, you haven't lost your sex appeal. Because you've become a Christian, you haven't lost your sex appetite.

It's how they're to be preserved and guarded in sanctification and honor so that they won't ruin what God intends to be a very precious friendship. Now then, the world has one way of dealing with sex appetite and sex appeal, and God has another way. Let's look at man's way for a moment.

And unfortunately, it's man's way we follow in institutes like this. It's man's way we follow in churches. It's man's way we follow in Christian circles alive.

And it's rampant in America. It's rampant in America. And so it is in Britain.

Here's man's way. Man's way, this is the shy sort of person who's got a little bit reticent about ever really releasing himself in any sort of sex appeal or sex appetite. He says the answer is repression.

Repression. So he sits on his sex appetite. Repression is the attempt to ignore sex appetite and suppress sex energy which God has created within us.

He's a man who tries to ignore that these things are within us. God's given us. Let's don't look at sex as a smirky, dirty sort of subject.

That's where the world has brought it down. God put this mechanism into us. Let's bring it into the presence of his glory, and in the blaze of his presence say, Lord Jesus, thank you for making me like that.

It's wonderful, but I want you to guard that mechanism so that it doesn't damn my life. It'll drive my life. But the world says, no, repress it.

Sit on it. Hold it down. You know what happens, don't you? The result, at its worst, is usually either the hospital or the asylum.

And that's a fact. Psychopathic people up and down America today will be traced to the split personality and the break in their personality, usually to sex trouble. In the case, in any case, repression and suppression of sex appetite, just sitting on them like sitting on a boiling kettle, eventually produces psychological or pathological abnormalities.

And there are tons of Christians with abnormalities like that. Tons of them. All over the place.

All over the place. So it isn't repressionism as an answer. The world says, very well then, if it isn't repressionism, I know what it is, and this is the most popular, of course, and this is contemporary with the age.

It's expressionism. Expressionism. And Paul, who is a great psychologist, Paul who is a master analyst and diagnostician, Paul analyzes to us, in the three words I gave you just now from 1 Thessalonians 4, the three ways of sex expressionism.

Three ways of sex expressionism. Here they are. Number one, defrauding.

Defrauding. He says, you remember, that everyone should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, that no man go beyond and defraud, oppress, overreach his brother in this matter. What do I mean by defrauding? My friend, defrauding is exciting hungers which you know you cannot righteously satisfy.

Let me repeat that slowly. Defrauding is exciting hungers which you know you cannot righteously satisfy. Whether between girl or girl, fellow or fellow, or girl and fellow.

And make no mistake about it. And it takes the form of self-abuse, it may take the form of sodomy, it may take the form of petting, necking, and flirting. And I want to be absolutely straight, and I want to go clean down the line.

No one can live a sanctified life. No one can live in the power of the Holy Ghost. No one can live honorably before men.

No one can live the life I've been preaching every day in chapel hour here and defraud his brother or his sister in this matter. No one. And you can take it or leave it, as we shall see in a moment.

It rules out utterly. Such things as masturbation. Sex perversion.

Sodomy. Petting. Necking.

Flirting. They're all in the same cloud. And I want to take just a moment to say something to the fellows, and then I'm going to take a word and say something to the girls.

Look fellows, you have no conception, unless you're a married man, unless you've had experience as much as I have, an evangelistic world all over the world, dealing with young people and older folk, having pastoral sessions galore. You have no conception what a mishandling of the life of a girl can mean in future life. You can set biological machinery into action, and you can spoil and ruin a girl's life, and you can get away with it, but she can't.

She suffers ever after. You think it's a night out, you think it's pleasant, you think it's this, that, and the other, but actually you have started ruination there. And but for the grace of God, something dreadful can happen.

And then I'm talking to the girls, and I'm saying this, girls, you haven't a clue, you haven't a notion, you never will do. Girls can never know. As fellows can never know the other side, girls can never know.

What appeal, what a strain, what a tremendous magnetism you can create and generate by falsely, falsely living, and falsely behaving, and sexually acting in the presence of men. In other words, breaking the rules of sanctification and honor. I am separate unto the Lord.

I am honorable before men, because the Holy Ghost dwells in me, as we shall see in a moment. Defrauding. Defrauding is exciting hunger in one another that you know you cannot righteously satisfy.

Let's go further. Oppressing. Oppressing, my friend, is exerting a forceful personality upon a weaker vessel until you stop it of initiative, individuality, and vitality.

You know one of the wickedest, one of the wickedest sins today is for a towering personality of a fellow, or a towering personality of a girl. A girl can have it over another girl, a fellow can have it over another fellow, or a fellow can have it over a girl, and sometimes a girl over a fellow. There's a powerful personality that's brought to bear on a weaker vessel, so that you just stop them of initiative, individuality, yes, end of initiative, and vitality, by oppressing them.

Oppressing them. And I want to warn anybody here who is suspecting what is known as a possessive friendship. I'm not talking about comradeship now, and I'm not talking about companionship.

I'm talking about that sort of friendship which is just like the dog and his master. Master everywhere he goes, dog follows, and there's no separation, there's sheer possessiveness there. It can be very unhealthy, and it can lead to oppression.

The third is overreaching. Overreaching. Now that explains itself.

Overreaching, my friend, is exceeding the laws of chastity and holiness until disaster comes. I was talking to the principal of a Bible college just a little while ago who was over in our country, and he told me the shattering news that nearly thirty-thirty of the students in a Christian school had to be sent home because of immorality. They had exceeded the laws of chastity and holiness, and disaster had fallen.

To behave like this is to be judged by God. Oh, my dear young people, let me say it from God's own word and from my heart and all my love for you. Listen to me, listen to me with both your ears.

To defraud, to oppress, to overreach is to merit the judgment of God upon you as a Christian. For the Lord is the avenger of all such as we have forewarned you and testified. Now, nothing could be clearer than that.

Nothing could be clearer than that. So man's way, man's way, is either repressionism or expressionism. And expressionism, as we've seen, takes these three forms.

Follow them. Snap your finger. Say, I couldn't tell us who Stephen is in any way to tell me.

You'll get it. Be sure your friend will find you out. By defrauding, you're going to spoil and ruin a life, and you'll have to answer for it at the judgment seat of Christ.

By oppression, you're going to drain and sap another vessel so that they can't be used for Jesus Christ. It'll be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ. You may hide it and get away now, but you won't dare.

No, you won't. No, you won't. You can't condemn sin in the sinner and condone it in the saint.

Overreaching? Well, that may visit you right now, and you'll go out in shame. Go out in shame. Do you know that I have a mental picture now of a council away there in the British Isles? I had to sit on that mission board, and in one afternoon, one afternoon, we had to go through the papers of three missionaries, two fellows and one girl that had to be sent back from the field.

They'd gone through Bible school, dynamic, super young folks who could preach the gospel, sent back, every one of them overreaching. Well now, listen. That's man's way.

God's way, thank God, is this. Listen carefully to this. Not limitation, not license, but liberty.

Not limitation, not license. I'm using a psychological term here, but sublimation. Now, it's wonderful that in the context of this very passage, Paul finishes up with this.

He, therefore, that despises, despises not man, but God. Praise God, this, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. Now, listen to me.

I was talking this morning about crowning Jesus Lord of your life, and the Holy Spirit flowing from your life, ankle, knees, thighs, waters to swim in. Listen. Before we leave this auditorium tonight, I am praying and hoping that in this very place where we have dealt with God as touching our general, general yieldedness, we're going to deal with our particular yieldedness, and we're going to say, Lord Jesus, as from tonight, as from tonight, thank you, I praise you for my sex life.

I thank you, you created me like that. I thank you, you gave me sex appetite. I thank you, you gave me sex capacity.

I thank you that you've given me that wonderful mechanism in me that's creative, for that is our creative life. But Lord Jesus, I want you to take it under your control, I want the Holy Spirit to master it, and I want the Holy Spirit to so control it and hold it in check, that my whole life will be of sanctification as touching God, and honor as touching man. If you yield your mind to Jesus Christ, you will be an intelligent Christian.

If you yield your heart to Christ, you will be a devotional Christian. If you yield your will to Christ, you will be a forceful Christian. If you yield your sex life to Jesus Christ, you will be a dynamic Christian.

I have no authority for saying this, but I have a personal conviction that John, chapter 7, has a reference to this very thing. You know where it says, he that believeth into me, we were dealing with it this morning, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. Where's the innermost being of a person? Where is that? If you look in the authorized version, you'll read it, not his innermost being.

Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. I believe that the center of a man's life is that creative side. Just there, the very heart of his sex life.

That's what makes him dynamic, that's what makes him appeal, that's what makes him creative. Now, when the Holy Spirit is reigning there, he takes those energies, and instead of letting them go down in suppressionism or expressionism, he leads them out in sublimation and usefulness and liberty. And you know when the Holy Spirit, this is wonderful, listen to me, I'm telling you this from my own experience, when the Holy Spirit is lord of your sex life, lord of your sex life, you know what happens? God puts a wall of fire around you, and when any girl or fellow man or woman tries to break that wall of fire to get in for things that he hasn't a right to, or she hasn't a right to, they get bitten, they get bitten.

As soon as they try to break through, they get a shock. This man's a holy man, I can't do that with him. This woman's a holy woman, I can't do that with her.

Sanctification and honor. And their life is one of honor. And I'll tell you another thing, that sort of person hasn't that sloppish, sentimental, stupid, flirting sort of way about them.

Instead, they carry a poise and a resilience and a dignity of friendship. And they're grand companions, they're full of fun, they're just sparkling with fun, and they're good fun. And they know how to behave, they know how to behave in the presence of men, they know how to behave in the presence of women, vice versa, they know how to behave in any company.

Why? Because they're just absolutely poised in the self-control and sanctification of the Holy Spirit. And when I talk about liberty, I mean exactly what I said last night in preaching at the Moody Memorial Hall. Liberty in the scriptural sense is not the desire to do what you want, liberty is the power to do what you ought.

And thank God that we have been called not to uncleanness, says 1 Thessalonians 4, but unto holiness. And the secret of this holiness is the Holy Ghost. Only the Holy Ghost can sublimate and control our sex appetites and appeal so to make our vessels unto sanctification and honor.

I don't think I'll stay with that any longer. I hope I've driven that right home, right home. Don't be a beast, don't be an animal, because that's man's way.

Man's way is repression or expression, and that's nothing but animal. That's the lowest level, defrauding, oppressing, overreaching. Don't be even a carnal Christian who's half and half.

Be a spiritual Christian whose sex life is under the control of the Holy Ghost. And why? He takes that sex energy and he sublimates it, and you have a passion for souls, you have a passion for study, you have a passion for everything you do. You become dynamic.

Well, now there's a third aspect of friendship. There's a lot of waiting for this, I know. The third aspect of friendship is Christian courtship, or blessed, blessed experience for those who are called to it.

Christian courtship. This is, this is the God-guided friendship which leads ultimately to marriage. The pattern and principle which determine happy, successful Christian courtship, in my judgment, are laid down for us completely and categorically in Genesis chapter 2. And that's why the Lord Jesus, when asked about this subject, pushed them right over to the Old Testament.

In the beginning, God. Go back there. In the beginning, God.

And so let's go back there ourselves. Let's turn then to Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2, and the verses we read together. Now, if you study this beautiful story of the first love match, you'll see how God initiated it, how he guarded it, how he completed it.

And I want you to notice two main points, with three subheadings in each. Two main points in this wonderful story. This story of the first love match.

This story of the first marriage. This story when God brought two lives together in fusion and made them one. Here are the two main headings.

One, God's concern, and secondly, God's control. Now let's come back to the first one. First, God's concern.

In God's concern, I want you to see a principle, young people, that I hope you'll never, never, never, never want to question again. If you look at the movements of Genesis, the first thing was that God created Adam. The very next thing in the experience of Adam was his sex relationship, sex adjustment, sex sublimation.

That was the very next thing. And I'm absolutely convinced in my mind that the next thing to my conversion, to my new birth, is that I get this thing right in the presence of God, or else it's going to worry me all along down the line. It's going to affect my studies, it's going to affect my friendships, it's going to affect my service, it's going to affect everything.

Let's get it right. And the first thing I want to lay down this evening is this, that God's far more concerned about your life partner than you could ever be. Oh, you dear folk who think you're going to be left on the shelf.

You people who say, oh, dear, dear, dear, dear, will it ever come my way? I want to say this, just on that wave of happy humor, listen, listen, God is far more concerned about a life partner for you than you could be ten million times. And if God doesn't bring Miss Right, if God doesn't bring Mr. Right clean into your life and show you in the way I'm going to demonstrate tonight, then he's calling you to a life of celibacy and singleness which has its own compensations, as we shall see presently, and you have no right to question his judgment, no right at all. But oh, lay it down in your mind and never question it again.

Whatever my concern is around the circles of my life, sometimes it's worse there, not so bad there, not so bad there, almost banished here, now it gets worse. The circles of life, what C.S. Lewis calls the trough experiences, the undulations of life, the cycles of life, it's worse at some times than others, sometimes it doesn't worry you at all, and other times it's just a cocking care. Get down basically in your mind that God's more concerned about it than you could ever be.

That's clear enough. Very well then, God's concerned about it for three reasons. I'm talking now about life partners.

God's concerned about it, first of all, for human pleasure. What do you say? Human pleasure? Yes. God saw that it was not good for man to live alone, and God's always longing that we should live happy lives, and if God sees that your life is never going to be fully and completely happy without a life partner, he'll bring the life partner.

And just as God's relation to his son and the son's relationship to the church, so the husband's relationship to the wife, according to Ephesians. And if God looks down upon his son with pleasure, and the son looks down upon his church with pleasure, the husband's to look down upon his wife with pleasure, and the wife to the husband, so teaches the Ephesians. And God wants us to be happy, and if happiness in your particular instance will never be fully realized without a life partner, he'll see that one comes along, for he saw that it was not good for Adam to live alone.

He's concerned about it not only because of human pleasure, but secondly because of human partnership, because we go further and we read that he built a woman and helped meet a partner for Adam. Two are better than one. One shall chase a thousand, two shall put ten thousand to flight.

And there are instances when God says, two are better than one. Other times he says, no, I want one single person here. But there's a partnership in marriage, and I'm telling you this, that partnership is one of the most precious things that any married couple can ever know.

Do you know, I believe, that the most intense, powerful, prevailing prayer is the secret of a married couple who know what it is to be absolutely one in the Lord and in the city. Because if you read Peter carefully, you'll notice a warning in Peter's epistle to couples who are not looking to one another in honor, and the husband not recognizing the weaker vessel, and therefore prayers are being hindered. When the Lord Jesus brought my partner into my life, one of the things I asked, first of all, was the Lord would fuse our spirits, our souls, together in such a way that in any situation in my ministry when I couldn't even trust the church, I couldn't trust a whole set of praying people, Heather and I could get down on our knees and know that our agreement in love and life would go crashing through to the very throne and bring down the answer I couldn't get any other way.

Partnership in life. Partnership in love. Partnership in service.

Partnership. Help-meet. That's what the word means.

Help-meet. Somebody stepped before to ever be your help-meet. The third reason, of course, of God's concern in love, courtship, and marriage, is not only human pleasure and human partnership, but certainly human parenthood.

Human parenthood. Because, if you read very carefully, in chapter 1 in verse 28, God blessed them and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. And I want to say this, there are people who expounded that word in Peter, and I go again to Peter, because he's the married man, and in his epistle he has more to say about these delicate points of marriage than anyone else.

He uses a phrase that you'll remember, talking about marriage, he goes on to say, Those who are the heirs of the grace of life. The grace of life. If you ever hear a preacher get up and talk about that grace of life there, heirs of the grace of life, and talk about it as eternal life, go up and tell him that it's poor exegesis.

Heirs of the grace of life, there is a peculiar privilege given to two people brought in a marriage made in heaven. It's something denied angels, archangels, and every other host in heaven. It's given to men and women who are married in the Lord.

And it's that priceless privilege of bringing into the world precious little lives, to be sanctified before birth, at birth, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to honor the parents, and one day to become the very basis of a Christian home, which is the very keystone of civilization. I know nothing more wonderful, so far as marriage goes, than the treasured privilege and honor of parenthood. It humbles me in the dust every day as I think of my little Jonathan, three years of age.

Oh God, oh God, help Heather and me to bring that little treasured life up unharmed by mishandling from the parents. Oh Lord, may he breathe in the very atmosphere of heaven in the home. From a child, may he learn the scriptures which are able to make him wise unto salvation.

Wonderful. God's concerned. He's more concerned about it than you.

He's concerned for your pleasure, your human pleasure. He's concerned for your human partnership. He's concerned for your human parenthood.

Well now, let's move on to God's control in the matter. And my, this story brings it out. Listen carefully.

In this story in God's control, we have, first of all, love's preparation. Then we have love's revelation. Then we have love's consummation.

Love's preparation. How did God prepare Adam for Eve, and how did God prepare Eve for Adam? Here's how God prepared, first of all, Adam for Eve. Listen to me very carefully.

God came down in the cool of the evening and had a talk with Adam, and said, Adam, listen, you don't know what's twisting in your life. You've never seen what I'm going to talk about. You haven't omniscient.

You're only a human being. You're a created being. Therefore, you can't know what's missing in your life.

But listen, you need a pastor in your life. And God began to talk to Adam about a life partner. And Adam listened to God.

And Adam acquiesced in God's will. Because God could have never pressed a woman upon his life without his consent. It would have been immoral.

And we've got to accept it as an implication, a clear implication, that Adam said, right, Lord, do anything you like with me. Right, said God. Will you sleep in my will? And God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.

A deep sleep to fall upon Adam. While he was asleep, God took out of him that with which to build the woman. And I want to hurry here and say this.

And this is terribly important. Listen, young people, perhaps this is the most vital thing I can say here tonight. The most vital thing.

If you want God to bring the pastor of his choice in your life, you have to be willing to sleep in his will. You have to be willing to say, Lord, I'm going to sleep and rest in your will until you awaken me to the right

partner. You'll never find a flirt ever finding the right partner.

They may get second best, but they can never, never guarantee that they'll get God's best. But if you're prepared to say, Lord, I'm prepared to sleep in thy will, and as I sleep in thy will and rest in thee, make it a matter of prayer as often as it recurs to my mind, and then just leave it with thee. Lord, you'll bring the right one and live a healthy life of companionship in the fellowship of the church.

He'll bring the right one along. And listen, while you're asleep in the will of God, do you know what you'll be able to do? You'll be able to take out of your life that with which to build character in other people's lives. And you'll never show me a person who goes around necking and flirting and petting and living the basest sort of life who's a man or a woman building character into other people's lives, or even being a soul winner.

But let's put it another way, and this is terribly important. Unless you're sleeping in God's will, God will never build a wife for you, because he's not going to build a second-rate wife. He's not going to build a wife that's going to fit into your loose, immoral thought of living.

No, no, no. It's only when you're living on the highest level of his will that he'll bring the right partner along, building the woman to fit into a life that's living a holy, sanctified, honorable testimony to God. Love's preparation.

He builded the woman. He caused the deep sleep to come upon Adam. Secondly, love's revelation.

Now, as you know, I'm absolutely thrilled that there is nothing here in this story that tells us just how Adam was awakened. Because you'd say, that's the way you've got to be awakened. God has his various ways of awakening you.

Like the dear fellow who was very concerned about a girl named Patience. He was having his quiet times in the Hebrew epistle and came across that verse, he had need of Patience. He said, that's it! And I'm going to tell you this for your own comfort.

Your own comfort. If God has a partner for your life, and you are living in his will, and sleeping in his will, and resting in his will, and rejoicing in his will, he will never, never allow you to miss the partner that he's brought to your life. You never need worry one bit about it.

God would never let you down like that. That's an insult on his character. It doesn't, doesn't revolve on such a tiny little point as just either seeing the right one one evening.

Not at all. If you're living in the presence of God, he'll see to it that in his own time the right one will be revealed to you. Love's revelation.

And Adam was awakened from sleep. There's love's revelation. And as he opened his eyes, he looked into the face of the woman whom God had builded for him.

God had built for him. God had prepared for him. It's wonderful.

It's a beautiful picture. And from love's revelation we go to love's consummation. Because having met each other, now God brought them together.

And the first marriage ceremony took place, for God married them. God married them right there. That was the first marriage ceremony.

And all marriage is based upon this very passage. God made them one flesh. And I want you to see how consummation, consummation in love, is an affinity of spirit, of soul, and of body.

Of spirit, of soul, and of body. And this is terribly important. Follow me closely here.

Love will never be consummated where there isn't that threefold affinity. Never. And you know that in England, I don't know if you use the term here, there are more divorce cases, more divorce cases in the world on the basis of non-consummation than anything else.

That's a fact. And true consummation is affinity of spirit, soul, and body. Well now, let's start.

Affinity of spirit. How do I get that? Why, they met in God. They met in God.

God brought Eve. And I like to think of it as this way. There was Adam, now awakened from his sleep.

There was Eve, now prepared for Adam. And there was God. And they met in God, and they were fused in God.

And Paul uses a phrase in a context which has very much relevance to this. He says, He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. And he made them one flesh, fused by the spirit.

Now let's just apply that for a moment. Affinity of spirit means what? I'll tell you what affinity of spirit means. In the first place, an obvious truth.

It means that you could never marry anybody else but a Christian. You couldn't marry anybody who wasn't a Christian because you wouldn't have affinity in spirit. They're dead in trespasses and in sins, and you're alive to God.

So how can you marry someone who's dead? Kierkegaard, the philosopher-theologian who gave up his fiancée after he was converted, gave this explanation to his lady friend. He said, I can't marry you because you are an eternity too young for me. That's deep thought.

I'll put it more crudely by quoting an old hoary-headed African elder out in Chokwe land, Portuguese West Africa. Out sitting there in one of the seats, and he was ministering the word to a crowd of natives. And he said, All right, you young people, he said, Go on, marry, he said.

Marry if you like. But if you're going to marry an unconverted person, he says, don't come anywhere near here because I don't like you carrying around a corpse. That was terrific.

I say amen to that. So it must be in the Lord. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, the last verse, absolutely finalizes that.

Paul says, If death hath severed the marriage union because one partner's death, you're free to marry again only in the Lord. Moffat's translation, only a Christian. Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.

And how any fellow or girl who calls himself a Christian can with open eyes marry an unconverted person even, even with the expectancy of faith that by marrying them they'll get converted is something I can never, never fathom. Never fathom. Well now, affinity of spirit means not only that, it means something

else.

You say there are a thousand of Christian girls, they can't all be my partners, that's why I'm pausing here. That's perfectly true. That's why when God brings the right one along, it's not only affinity of spirit in the sense that that person's a Christian, it's something more than that.

By the very coming together, you find yourself lifted, elevated by love. For all true love elevates. Lust degenerates.

And listen, the two Christians can fall in lust. Yes they can. And when infatuation walks in through the door, reason goes out through the window.

And if I come to a fellow or a girl in my church and begin to talk to them because I've seen them there, perhaps, perhaps not with the discipline that becomes Christian men and women, and I talk to them about is this a serious friendship upon which I can pronounce my blessing and rejoice with you in it, and somebody turns around and says what business is it of yours and starts flying off the handle, I know very well it's not of God. For all love is reasonable. All love is patient.

All love is true. All love is pure. All love is tender.

Love elevates. Lust degenerates. And two Christians can fall in lust.

The two Christians can fall in lust. And love will elevate you right into the presence of God. And I'll tell you what you'll know, this is what you'll know, just what I knew when I met my own wife, Heather, Heather Brown LeBlois, when the Lord brought us together, we were conscious at once that God meant more to us than ever before.

The word of God was more wonderful. I felt a deeper urge to win souls. My whole spiritual life was elevated.

And I knew I'd met the right one so far as the spiritual was concerned. Then there's affinity of soul. Affinity of soul.

And you'll notice here that it wasn't health meat and Adam looked and called a woman. It wasn't God who called a woman. It was Adam.

Adam said, Woman. Woman. Out of man.

The complement of myself. The other self. Two of us make one.

Without me I'm only half there. Without her I'm only half there. That's a tremendous truth.

Affinity of mind. Affinity of heart. Affinity of will.

And that's a tremendous truth because you know it answers some of the problems that beset young people regarding social status and all the rest of it. God doesn't bring people together who are completely unrelated in that way. He always works harmoniously.

And you'll find affinity of spirit. Affinity of soul. Yes, and affinity of body.

For he looked at Eve and said, Bone is my bone and flesh is my flesh. And there's a beautiful thought here. God brings two lives together and he sees to it that even from a physical point of view there's this affinity that the bodies relate one to the other.

If God is going to call a couple for the mission field he won't bring somebody into your life whose ill health immediately means that you'll never get out there. He won't bring somebody whose physical sort of life completely is incompatible rather with your own. There'll be the sense of size and age and health and physiology and all the rest of it.

All that God wonderfully unites together in the true marriage for all true marriages are made in heaven. But here's another thing too. It's a precious thought.

In this matter of oneness, consummation, I want you to see that the woman isn't put down there. There's a glorious equality about it. She wasn't taken out of his head in order to rule the man.

She wasn't taken out of his seat in order to be trodden underfoot by the man. She was taken out of his side in order to share an equal place. And so we have God-concerns.

God-control. God-control in love's preparation. God-control in love's revelation.

God-control in love's consummation. Affinity of spirit, soul and body. One.

That's the perfect marriage. I know that you're sinners. And I know I'm a sinner.

And I know we're all sinners. And because we're all sinners, we are possessed of irregularities, inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies. And because of that, there will be times of friction.

There will be times of stress and strain. But listen. The secret of a happy married life is just summed up in this.

The adjustment of love. Every day I have my quiet time with my lover Lord. He's got to rebuke me through the scriptures.

And I've got to be readjusted to him as touching this, that or the other. He's perfect. I'm imperfect.

And every day I've got to be readjusted to him. In married life, if love is going to be perfect, we've got to speak the truth in love. We've got to make the necessary adjustments.

The idiosyncrasies, the irregularities and inconsistencies have to be put right in the wonderful atmosphere of love. And that's what strengthens love. And the things that could divide actually bind love more and more.

And so, married life can become the most happy and wonderful thing on earth. I've got one closing word. And I want to say it to those here today, especially you girls who always seem to outnumber fellows when it comes to churches, when it comes to mission fields.

It's a sad thing. One of the saddest things. One of the most shameful things, fellows.

Listen to me. One of the most shameful things. Carry this into your ministry, that for every single fellow who goes to the mission field, seven women go.

And it does create a real problem. Because if it were a question of matching fellow against girl and so on, the girls always outnumber the fellows. And there does arise the question as to whether or not God does intend a life of singleness and celibacy, either for fellows or for girls.

And from Matthew chapter 19, we see quite clearly that the Lord Jesus said, there's a single estate that is created by a natural cause. There are some people who are born in such a way, such a temperament, that the idea of marriage never just enters into their head. And they're perfectly happy and perfectly youthful and perfectly wholesome and perfectly healthy.

And they can be used just as mightily for the Lord, naturally. There are those who have to live lives of singleness because it's being created not by a natural cause, but by a medical cause. A medical cause.

And Jesus spoke of it. And they can be healthy, and they can be happy, and they can be youthful, and they can be dynamic, and they can get all the reward in heaven. And then there are the third class who are not single by natural causes, not single by medical causes, but single by spiritual causes.

God certainly lays his hand upon a person, and Jesus said it's to him to whom it is given. If you can receive it, you can receive it, you can accept it. But some people can't receive it.

And Jesus didn't generalize and say singleness is an estate for everybody, not a bit of it. He said it's for them to whom it is given. And you can't grasp it.

And I said, I'm going to have a single life. I'm going to live a single life. I'm going to be, I'm going to be a bachelor.

I'm going to be a spinster, and I'm just going to do because I want to. That's not right. And it'll never be blessed by God.

If you snatch at it, it is wrong. It is wrong as living out of the will of God. But if God makes it real to you in the place of prayer and the place of waiting upon him that he's calling you to a life of singleness because the specific type of service he's giving to you demands that, then receive it.

Receive it. And I'm going to tell you what that does. To everyone to whom that life of celibacy is given, there's, first of all, certain compensation.

And I'm telling you that those compensations, if I had time to deal with them from the scriptures, are complete. They're complete. You can never compare the married life to a single life and say, well, if you're married, you've got the thrill of little children, the home, and all the rest of it, and single life, you haven't this, that, and the other.

That's wrong. You can't compare them because they run on parallel lines and they're mutually exclusive. And God makes the compensations in this life that completely make it a whole and perfect and useful life.

And you can't relate it to this life and say, let's compare it and see which is better. There are the compensations of a life of singleness. Secondly, there are the concentrations of a life of singleness.

Attend unto the Lord without distraction. There are some mission fields and some strategic pieces of service that cannot be done in married life. I very much doubt, and I know I'm touching on a very, very delicate point here, but I just give my own opinion.

I give my own opinion. I very much doubt whether God intends that a man who's going to chase around the country, chase around the country from north to south, east to west, cover thousands and thousands of miles and be away from home I very much doubt that in the majority of cases, whether God intends that that person should have a wife and children and bring them up. And whether or not that's true, I'm quite certain that there are certain places on the mission field that cannot be reached, particularly pioneer work, blazing right the way through into jungle land and try and carry along a family with your little children in conditions such as that.

But still, every man has to be persuaded in his own mind. I'm just giving an illustration of that. And I believe there are certain types of ministry which demand such concentration that to be a celibate, a single person, is the right thing.

Compensation, concentration, and finally, you know there's a very wonderful way in which a single person can know a depth of consecration to God which again can't be compared to the other because we're not comparing the two, but is so yielded that that person can give themselves up to a life of prayer and a life of service in consecration to God which can only, only be equaled, only be equaled by the life of a man like the Apostle Paul, who if he were a married man at one time, certainly as we see him in the epistles, was single, his wife must have died, some people say he was married, but it can't be proved. And there was Paul. Look at the consecration of the man.

Look at the consecration of the man. Does that mean that married couples can't be consecrated? No! No! But I'm just showing that the single life has it's peculiar benefit Godward as well as man. Young people, I've talked away here for nearly an hour, believe it or not, and we're going to close in prayer and I'm handing over to our dear brother, Mr. Newell, and he'll conduct the rest of the service as he thinks wise or perhaps dismiss which might be a wise thing to go to your own room to quietly pray this through.

But I just want to finish by saying this. I want to finish by saying, first of all, thank you, in the name of my dear Savior, for being such wonderful listeners at such a time of night as this. Thank you for staying to listen to some very straight speaking.

Thank you for showing your allowance and generosity in dealing with a very delicate subject. And all I pray is that as I offer this message to my precious Lord, that he may apply the principles of the Spirit to your heart and that you'll never have any more problem in your life in viewing this whole question of social relationship. You know what Christian comradeship is.

You know what Christian companionship is. You know the dangers of it, man's way, God's way. You know that the sex life controlled by the Holy Spirit is the only secret of a body and a life, a vessel, in sanctification and honor.

You know that if God has brought you into Christian courtship, thank God. Remember His control or His concern, His concern, His concern. Remember His control in love preparation, love revelation, love consummation.

If He's called you to a life of singleness, remember it's something Jesus anticipated and taught. And the compensation says the concentration of life as well as the consecration. And you don't miss anything if God calls you to it.

Because it is purpose for your life. And you don't want anything else than that, do you? God bless you and make this message a blessing to you all. Let us pray.

We bow in prayer. This isn't a consecration service in that sense, nor am I wanting to cover ground that's been covered already in the chapel hours. But may I ask you just to do one thing, either here or when you get to your room tonight, whoever you are, whatever stage of friendship you've reached, will you look up into the face of the Lord Jesus and say, Lord Jesus, I'm prepared to sleep in Thy will.

Lord, I'm prepared to sleep in Thy will. And I'm willing to be made willing. Will you go a step further? Will you open the whole of your sex life to the Holy Spirit and say, O Lord the Spirit, reign in this part of thy life.

Reign there. Reign there. You know what will happen? You'll become a vessel unto sanctification and honor.

Lord, hear the silent prayers that ascend from these precious lives bowed in Thy presence. Lord, I thank Thee for every one of them. The potentiality, the possibility of every one of these dear fellows and girls.

And I ask from the depths of my heart that Thou will take this talk given perhaps at a time of the day when our minds are not as alert as they might have been, but use it for Thy glory, not only to bless their own lives, but to bless other lives through their own ministry in coming days. And may their lives be not only intelligent, not only devoted, not only thoughtful, but dynamic, because they know what it is to yield their sex life to the Holy Spirit. We ask this for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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