

LESSON 2



CHRISTIAN COURTSHIP

Scripture Texts: Ecclesiastes 12:1; Titus 2:6-8, 11-12; I Thessalonians 5:19-22; I Corinthians 6:12, 20; Romans 12:1-2; Amos 3:3

In the preceding lesson we studied about the foundation of the home as a group. Today we look at the beginning of the foundation stones of the home as an individual process. Any home begun on one's own desires and efforts is a home built on the sand, and it will not stand the storms ahead. The finite minds of men and women cannot make the proper choice in the great and important decisions in life without the help of One wiser than they. Today we look at one of the most important decisions of our lives, that of choosing the right companion for life.

God knows that one best and will help bring it to pass if we ask and wait on Him. Let us look to God's Word for some help in the matter.

MEMORY VERSE: *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Romans 12:21

Upright Living

Upright living is purchased at the cost of sacrifice. It never was, and it never will be, easy to live a good life in a wicked world. Christians have certain ideals which set them apart from those of the world; they are different.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. God tells us that youth is not just a time for fun and frivolity, but it is a serious time, a time to think of God and turn to Him. Mental and physical faculties are at their best then. Hope, zeal, and initiative are strong. The heart is not yet hardened and the will bound by sin. Young people saved early will carry on a Christian courtship. They will purpose to seek the help of God to establish a Christian home. They will desire to serve God with their joined lives.

Titus 2:6-8 Young men likewise—advised as the young women in verse 4. Both are **to be sober minded**. This means to set one's mind on things that really matter, to desire eternal things more than passing, temporary ones. Seek for truth rather than chaff. Titus 2:11-12 teaches us to deny **ungodliness and worldly lusts**. Second Timothy 2:22 says, **Flee also youthful lusts**. Unsaved young people are guided by desires, or lusts, uncontrolled by God's will. This is sin. They seek pleasure, thrills, and adventure. God says to flee these and live **soberly, righteously, and godly**. God gave mankind a desire for the companionship of the opposite sex. It is good. He made rules for its right enjoyment. They are good. Only when we break His rules and let lust rule does trouble come. In disobeying these rules, many bring a lifetime of sorrow upon themselves and their families.

Hold Fast to Truth

1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit. It is very easy to quench the Spirit of God. God's Holy Spirit is constantly moving on our souls. Some may allow evil thoughts or their own fleshly thoughts to repel these moves. By this they refuse Him permission to lay hold on their hearts and minds. Remember, Satan works through the mind. This grieves the Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30). They quench the Spirit when they allow any unruly passion to guide them.

1 Thessalonians 5:20 Despise not prophesyings—preaching and teaching. We need to attend every church

service. We should feel a need to be checked out regularly by the Word.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things--see how they line up with God's Word. Are they good or evil? What is their source? (See 1 John 4:1.)

1 Thessalonians 5:5 Ask yourself in every situation, "What would Jesus do?" **Hold fast that which is good.** All else will pass away as a house built on the sand.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil. When you see evil make its appearance in any form, have nothing to do with it (1 Timothy 6:11; James 4:7).

The Good Life

1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me--I have a right to them, or they are no harm to me, young folks often say. But not all are **expedient**. If an act would hurt one's reputation or bring dishonor to the cause of Christ, we must not do it. We cannot follow the world's courtship standards. They are set too low.

Do not be deceived by the lies of Satan as the spirit of a "new" morality sweeps our world. This "new" morality is just the old immorality dressed in a new disguise. Social acceptance of wrong never makes it right. A few years ago a respectable society would have rejected as unthinkable some of the physical intimacies common today. Free touching and handling of one of the opposite sex, indecent positions such as lying down or lolling while entertaining, entertaining alone with no adult in the house, petting and kissing when there is no real love or sense of direction--these practices lead to sin and heartbreak. A happy courtship is carried on by obeying the principles laid down by God.

1 Corinthians 6:20 Ye are bought with a price--the price of the life of the Son of God. This places us under an obligation to **glorify God** in our bodies and spirits. Any act which defiles our bodies, any thought which defiles our spirits, and any word or story which defiles our minds will bring destruction to us (1 Corinthians 3:17). Right courtship is carried on realizing that body, mind, and spirit belong to God.

Transformed, Not Conformed

Romans 12:1-2 Present your bodies a living sacrifice. When Jesus came, God was finished with dead animal sacrifices; now He desires our bodies as living sacrifices. The body is the tool .

Romans 12:6 of the mind and spirit; in it we carry on all activities of this earthly life. If it is all given over to God's service, its doings will be **holy, acceptable unto God**. People thus dedicated will conduct their courtship in a way pleasing to God. They will not be **conformed to this world**--will not follow the pattern set by worldly people. We are to be **transformed** by Christ's life within us so that we do God's will.

When two people love in true devotion and pledge themselves to life partnership, then proper expressions of affection are in order. But counterfeit expressions where love does not exist are as dangerous as they are cheap. This is false love or lust. It stirs the lower passions. Kissing and petting may give a passing thrill, but the price is much too high when it cheats one of the joys of giving an abiding and pure love to a companion one respects and honors and of building a home where Christ is served. There is a better way, the way of salvation in Christ and adherence to His plan. Pray about it. So much depends upon our dating and courtship--our lives, lives of others, the homes we set up, and our service to God. We must not be guided by chance or one's human judgment. Parents and older saints can give good counsel, but God promises to direct the path of those who trust Him and lean not to their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Mixed Marriages

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Courtship looks toward marriage, the closest earthly tie which this world knows. It cannot be a happy or successful experience unless the two agree in beliefs, interests, and goals. The Bible forbids marriage with the unsaved. How can an unsaved person build a Christian home? It is wrong to date a person whom, for any reason, one has no right to marry. We should not make intimate friends of those who do not love the Lord or of those of a false religion. To date these invites problems. Bring your friend to church with a sincere desire to see him or her saved.

JUST A THOUGHT

Sudden romances usually end the same way.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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