

## CHRISTIAN COURTSHIP, PART I

This past Wednesday night I started a mini-series on the subject of Christian Courtship. My point of inspiration came one recent Sunday night as I was shaking hands at the back of the church and I noticed a couple of our young people talking together and enjoying it! One of the benefits of pastoring in the same location for the better part of a lifetime is that I am able to see young people born, born again, dedicate their lives to Jesus Christ, go off to college and then marry. As I pondered the young couple I humorously thought to myself, that it wasn't that long ago he was "yucky" and had "cooties." Now, he's not so yucky and if cooties are contagious, he is more than willing to be infected.

In my next time of prayer, the Lord impressed me to talk with our people about the Christian perspective of courtship. So allow me to give you some simple, biblical points on courtship:

### **1. Attraction to the opposite sex is normal.**

As youth move into and past puberty, don't be disheartened when they show interest in the opposite sex. This is normal and something, in this perverted world we live in, we can be thankful for. God's Word says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

The Bible says, "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:9). We see God declares our life with our spouse is to be a joyful experience. He went on to say that this is our "portion" in this life. This word is also translated from the Hebrew as "reward." God is telling us that in all of life one of the greatest rewards is that portion of existence with our mate! Now, to set us up for this great life experience, He has to place a desire in our heart to find the one with whom He intends for us to wed. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22).

There is an exception to the rule. The passage found in Matthew 19:12, is explained by Jesus. It reads, "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." A eunuch is a neutered person. A good way to remember what this is to think of the term neutral. Someone who is sexually in neutral. There are three ways this happens.

First, there are some born this way. This is very different from being drawn or attracted to the same sex. The activity associated with this is forbidden by Scripture (Leviticus 18:22). We don't have time to go into detail, but remember our God who is Love (I John 4:8, 16) is far too kind to give a desire that cannot scripturally be fulfilled. Therefore, according to the Word, we have no other choice but to associate the desire toward the same sex as a result of the fall of mankind. God will and can deliver from this sinful activity! Ministers and churches do great harm in two categories, when we a) do not declare this as sinful desire and b) love sinners and remind them we, too, have sinned and the same grace that saved and separates us is available for whosoever will! Returning to the three ways a person becomes an eunuch, they are born this way, meaning in neutral; a desire for sexual activity is bereft.

Secondly, there are some made this way. In the ancient days, the custom was that royal households would have men guarding the female royalty. Therefore, these men who guarded the chambers of the women were surgically made this way. Thankfully this cruel treatment is not practiced in civilized areas of the world. But, in the world that the Bible was written it was clearly understood (Daniel 1:7).

Thirdly, there are those who have made themselves this way for the Kingdom of God's sake. Meaning they have been directed by God to remain celibate, to serve God a special way as I Corinthians designates: "...He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:32). It must be clearly understood that being a celibate or spiritual eunuch is a gifting from the Lord. It cannot and should not be coerced upon anyone. Again, Jesus said, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matthew 19:12). "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (I Corinthians 7:8, 9).

By far and away, most of the people reading this fall into the category of married or one day married. The unmarried should not feel guilty because of the attraction you have toward the opposite sex, it is from God. "Marriage is honourable in all..." (Hebrews 13:4). "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Jesus said, "And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:5, 6). The first miracle Jesus performed was at a wedding (Mark 2). So, we see Scripture not only teaches that attraction to the opposite sex is normal; God has ordained it and in the state of Holy Matrimony promises to bless it!

The Lord willing, I shall continue this topic next week in *The Pastor's Word*.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

2003

Christian Courtship Part I – February 16, 2003

Christian Courtship Part II – February 23, 2003

Christian Courtship Part III – Court With The Parents' Blessing in Mind – March 2, 2003

Christian Courtship Part IV – What Constitutes a Godly Courtship – March 9, 2003

2008

The Rules for Dating/Courting: Part I – May 18, 2008

The Rules For Dating/Courting: Part II – May 25, 2008

The Rules For Dating/Courting: Part III – June 1, 2008

The Rules For Dating/Courting: Part IV – June 8, 2008

The Rules For Dating/Courting: Part V – June 15, 2008