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The Rules For Dating/Courtship, Part II

Last week we discussed the first two rules of dating:

I. Set a course for purity

II. Have a strong personal devotional life.

This week we are dedicating the entire Pastor's Word to one point. The reason we are giving a greater amount of discussion to this point is twofold. First of all, it is the most overlooked area in the dating/courtship and marriage arena, and secondly, it is one of the most important areas. When you put those two thoughts together, you can see why there are so many troubled marriages. This week we are discussing:

III. Submission to authority in dating/courtship.

One of the most common expressions that I have personally heard come from the mouth of teen rebels is, "It is my life, I'll live it the way I want to." Therefore, we begin by saying:

A. Your life is not your own, you belong to God.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

No one has the "right" to declare himself or herself independent of God. You breathe His air, walk over His ground, sail over His water, fly through His sky, live in the body He formed, see through eyes He designed, listen with ears He sculptured, and feel with nerves He made. We need to submit to the Lord as our Supreme Authority. To do otherwise is mutiny on the high seas of life! We date whom God approves and marry only within the perimeters of His Holy permission. To borrow the words of Mary, *"His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"* (John 2:5). Our Lord Jesus set the pattern for pleasing God when He said, *"...for I do always those things that please him"* (John 8:29). Let this also be our paramount rule of submission, i.e., we shall always do those things that please our Heavenly Father.

B. We are not on our own until we marry.

1. Males are responsible to have the parental blessing when they marry.

For some reason our society has sanctioned eighteen as a time when kids may make their own decisions. Sometimes we follow the traditional, "a boy becomes a man at 21 philosophy." Here's what the Bible says, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh"* (Genesis 2:24). Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 19:5 and Mark 10:7. Paul said it in Ephesians 5:31. We see this is not an isolated teaching, it is woven in the warp and woof of biblical fabric that a boy is not freed to cleave until he leaves father and mother,

and this must be done with their blessing, whatever the age. *“Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee”* (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Abraham gave strict orders to Eliezer: *“And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell”* (Genesis 24:3). So we see the parents were very instrumental in the choice of their son’s life partner. God recorded Rebekah’s grief over the usurpation of their authority in Esau’s choice of marriage partnership, *“And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?”* (Genesis 27:46). This mother was desperate that her remaining son not make the same mistake as his brother.

2. Females are required to have the parental blessing before they marry.

The tradition of the father giving the daughter away in marriage is a biblical concept, *“So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better”* (I Corinthians 7:38). Furthermore, if a daughter breeches this authority by taking the vows of marriage without Dad’s sanction, then that Dad (in the Old Testament) may call a veto, thus enforcing annulment over any vows taken outside the designated blessing. *“If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father’s house in her youth; And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her”* (Numbers 30: 3-5). The word “disallow” is from the Hebrew word, “נָוָה”, pronounced, “nuw”, and means “to refuse, forbid, neutralize, break, disallow, or make of none effect.”

In God’s chain of command, God leads the man and the man leads the wife. *“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God”* (I Corinthians 11:3). When a woman marries, she leaves the canopy of her father and comes under the canopy of the husband, *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23).

C. Our time is not our own, it belongs to God.

“My times are in thy hand...” (Psalms 31:15). *“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time...”* (Ecclesiastes 3:11). In our youth we have a temptation to speed things up instead of waiting on the Lord to bring the Right One into our life. This principle is essential. God will work through our parents and circumstances to bring to pass His will. Keep in mind: We cannot be right with God and wrong with Mom and Dad. Our job is to wait on God for His beautiful plan to come to fruition!

The Bible says, *“For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.”* *“Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee...”* Psalm 37:9, 34. Isaiah 40:30, 31 says, *“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

Remember, if you have been given God’s true love, you can wait: I Corinthians 13:4 says, *“Charity (God’s agape Love) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”*. James 1:4 says, *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect*

and entire, wanting nothing.” “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit” (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

- Pastor Pope -

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