

a sermon note



WHO WILL I MARRY?

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SERMON NOTE

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SESSION ONE

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CHOICE

Hymn: Trust & Obey

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way;
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise,
Not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear,
Not a sigh or a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief or a loss,
Not a frown or a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove
The delights of His love,
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows,
And the joy He bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet
We will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do;
Where He sends, we will go,
Never fear, only trust and obey.

Preliminary issues

1. The perfect will of God is a grown man and a mature woman coming together in marriage, not a boy or a girl.

The difference between man and boy or woman and girl is maturity. The definition of maturity is '*Becoming like Jesus*'. Eph.4:13-15

Brief explanation of Gen.2:18.

Nas God said it is not good that you should be alone? The reason why you are now looking for who to marry, is it because the Lord has said something concerning you [Isa.30:21] or could it be because your age and academic qualification or even social status is saying it is not good to be alone?

If the relationship you are considering does not begin with God, could you possibly force Him to go along with you [Lam.3:37]? God does everything beautiful in its own time, thus the timing must be of God because He does everything beautiful in its own time [Eccl.3:11]. The fact that all your friends or colleagues are getting hooked is not the reason for you too to start looking for who you can hook. The concept must begin with God [Col.1:18].

The danger with wrong timing is that it will never work out because in the agenda of God, there might still be several growth processes that you were meant to undergo before God leads you to His perfect will for your life.

2 (I). FACTS A WOMAN MUST CONSIDER BEFORE MAKING A CHOICE FOR MARRIAGE

a. Is his salvation genuine?

How would you know? You will know if his conversion experience is based on genuine conviction, conversion and conformity to the image of Christ. Yet, this is impossible if you yourself have not personally experienced genuine salvation. Thus, examine yourself first whether you are in the faith [2Cor.13:5], only then would you have the capacity to judge who or who is not saved.

- Genuine Conviction

Acts 2:36-37, Acts 16:29-34, Lk.3:9-10.

This is the point where a sinner sees the hopelessness of his present condition, the righteous demand of the holy God and the sufficiency of the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ as his only hope.

This is the call of the Holy Spirit that encourages the heart of a sinner to come unto Jesus so that he can be saved and freed from his sins [Heb.12:25, Rom.2:4-5].

- Authentic Conversion

Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, Ps.34:18

This is the response of a sinner who has seen the hopelessness of his situation and his helplessness in seeing he cannot deliver himself from his sin. It is repentance that comprises of sorrow and guilt for past sins with a decision to turn from it and live a better life by believing in Jesus as his Saviour and by making a commitment to follow Him from henceforth as the Lord of his life.

It is the act of coming to Jesus in order to receive salvation. This act must happen at a particular point in a person's life, at a particular place and at a particular time [Matt.11:28].

- Continuous Conformity

Matt.28:19-20, Rom.8:29, 1Cor.15:49 AMP, Rom.13:14, 2Cor.3:18, Eph.1:11.

This is the stage where the sinner has been converted from his old ways and is now being constantly and gradually formed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ through a life-long cumulative process of discipleship. Becoming like Jesus is the ultimate aim of the Christian life.

This is the act of daily following after Jesus in order for one to grow in his salvation [Matt.11:29, Lk.9:23].

b. Is he matured in the faith? [how?]

-By becoming more like Jesus. Eph.4:13-15

c. Does he know his life assignment?

[Tests of a genuine call]

- i. It begins and is sustained by divine burden [Jer.20:9, 1Cor.9:16]
- ii. It has to be eternal in origin& impact [Jer.1:5, 2Tim.1:9 Eph.2:10AMP]
- iii. Who does his '*call*' glorify? Jesus or self? [2Cor.5:15, Phil.2:21]
- iv. It doesn't fade with time, instead it gets stronger [Ex.2:21-25, Ex.3:1-4]

d. Is he actively pursuing his assignment?

-if not, he will just tie you down while he is pursuing money [Phil.2:21, Jn.9:4, Jn.4:34]

2 (II) FACTS A MAN MUST CONSIDER BEFORE MAKING A CHOICE FOR MARRIAGE

The first two points are the same as above [i.e. possession of genuine salvation and spiritual maturity]

a. Does she have a womb? Gen.2:23

[why a *womb*?]

-Capacity to incubate godly seed.[This is the supernatural ability to be able to receive and keep a divine vision until the time of fulfillment. Isa.7:14, Gen.3:15, Gen.12:1-2, Gen.18:9-11, Gen.25:21-26, Heb.11:11].

-Capacity to travail.Isa.66:7-8, Gen.3:16, Jn.16:21 [Ability to labour in the place of prayer until answers come. There is no godly woman of old who was not an intercessor. Sarah [Gen.12:10-20], Rebekah [Gen.25:22], Zipporah [Ex.4:24-26], Deborah [Judg.5:6-9], Esther [Est.4:15-16], Hannah [1Sam.1:6-18].

-Possession of a mother's heart.Isa.49:15. Deborah was a mother in Israel and it was not a mere title [Judg.5:6-9]. Beyond being a mother of your own children, like Sarah, there are nations God wants to bring forth through your womb [Gen.17:15-17].Being a mother means being a nurturer and not a murderer. If you will have a hospitable home, it is in the hands of your wife.

3. THE SOURCE OF A MARRIAGE PARTNER

***God:** Gen.2:18-23, Prov.18:22, Prov.19:14.

Marriage is a very good thing if you allow the Lord to give to you [Jer.2:13]. If God doesn't show you His mercy, you will most probably miss it in life as far as the choice of marriage is concerned.

A faithful husband or a prudent wife comes only from the Lord [James 1:17].

4. UNDERSTANDING DEEP SLEEP

(i) Why does God put people into deep sleep? Gen.2:21-23

a. So that He can have freedom to work without interference.

If the patient is not placed under anesthesia during a surgical operation, he will keep disrupting the work of the doctors who only want to help him [Ps.46:10]. The patient needs to be patient and allow the experts do their job if he will be okay again. It is the same with us in the choice of a marital partner.

So if God will have the liberty to work in our lives such that He will eventually lead us to the right person, we must agree to rest in Him, i.e. committing the matter into God's hands without being worried and anxious, looking left and right or running up and down [Phil.4:6-7].

(ii) What God mean by deep sleep. Ps.37:1, 3-7

a. Stop fretting. Ps.37:1, Phil.4:6-7, 1Pet.5:7.

Don't be afraid. That is not the way into a relationship. The fact that you're in your final year in school is not enough reason for fretting into a relationship; if you do, you will be frightened out of it! Release all your standards and preferences as they are some of the things responsible for why you worry [Rom.12:2]. You may think you know what you *want* but it is only God who knows what you **need** [Prov.16:25].

b. Trust in the Lord. Ps.37:3, Ps.62:5, 8;

To trust in the Lord is to lean on, rely and depend upon the Lord. This is the problem with most people. They deal with God suspiciously [James 1:6-7].

Most people believe that God is not trustworthy so they run around trying to do something for themselves. Whatever you do for yourself can never be like what the Lord will do for you [Gen.3:7, 21].

c. Do good. Acts 10:38

Focus on your personal assignment [2Cor.5:9-10 AMP]. Jesus went about doing good. What are you doing as you are going about? Are you fondling a sister you are courting? You are not doing good! Are you fornicating about? You are not doing good [1Cor.6:9-10]!

How many months old is your relationship and you have spoilt each other's spirits, souls and bodies with sexual sins such that by now there is no more trust in that relationship? Are you going about blackmailing a fellow sister so that the brother you are eyeing can forget her and notice you [Prov.11:9]? All these are not good. Focus on what God has called you to do and wait for the Lord!

d. Delight yourself in the Lord.Ps.37:4; 43:4, Job 27:10.

Seek your happiness in the Lord [GNB]. Most people see God as an unavoidable necessity but that must not be you! Make the Lord your joy and the rejoicing of your heart! Learn to enjoy God [Gen.5:22-24]. Don't be in the habit of coming because you need something... come because He has become your only need [Ps.42:1-2]. But, has He [Jer.29:13]?

e. Commit your way to the Lord.Ps.37:5, Ps.62:5, 8. NKJV

Why would you want to insist on your own way [Jer.6:16]? Don't you know that every way that has no source in God leads away from Him [Prov.4:18-19]? Why insist that the brother or sister you want must come from your tribe? Why would you be insisting on a particular academic qualification, height, social status or physical look? Don't you know that in Christ, all these counts for nothing [Col.3:11 TLB]?

f. Rest in the Lord.Ps.37:7, Heb.4:9-11

If you cannot rest in the Lord and every time you are always jumping up to do something for yourself, the Lord will be compelled to leave you alone and watch how far your own strength can carry you. You must learn to relax so that you can release this matter of the choice of who to marry into the hand of God [Gen.2:18].

This is the first condition for making a choice of marriage. You don't make a choice in anxiety. Never rush, only rest in Him.

SESSION TWO

SPECIFIC METHODS OF KNOWING GOD'S WILL

Hymn: Inspirer of the ancient seers

1. Inspirer of the ancient seers

Who wrote from Thee the sacred page,
The same through all succeeding years;
To us, in our degenerate age,
The spirit of Thy Word impart,
And breathe the life into our heart.

2. While now Thine oracles we read

With earnest prayer and strong desire,
O let Thy Spirit from Thee proceed,
Our souls to waken and inspire,
Our weakness help, our darkness chase,
And guide us by the light of grace.

3. Whene'er in error's path we rove,

The living God through sin forsake,
Our conscience by Thy Word reprove,
Convince and bring the wanderers back,
Deep wounded by Thy Spirit's sword,

And then by Gilead's balm restored.

4. The sacred lessons of Thy grace,
Transmitted through Thy Word, repeat,
And train us up in all Thy ways
To make us in Thy will complete;
Fulfill Thy love's redeeming plan,
And bring us to a perfect man.

5. Thus furnished from Thy treasury,
O may we always ready stand
To help the souls redeemed by Thee,
In what their various states demand
To teach, convince, correct, reprove,
And build them up in holiest love!

Gen.2:23

How can we become so certain and sure about who we are meant to marry? In the passage we read, Adam spoke with assurance. He said: *"This is now the bone of my bone"*, he didn't say *these* as of many, but *this* as of a particular person. He was certain. He was sure. He wasn't flipping between several girls.

How can we also become this definite? How can we also be this sure? How can we discern the specific person in the mind of God for our lives? This is the matter we need to trace in this session.

First of all, let us agree together that it is possible for a person to hear from God. Not even on relationship issues alone, but in every area of our lives [Jer.33:3, Jer.29:11-13, Matt.7:7-8].

Also, we need to understand that the leading and guidance of God is the basic right of every believer [Ps.32:8, Isa.48:17]. This is why it is not enough to say you heard God once about whom you are to marry and that is all.

If it is truly God that you heard, the Lord will yet speak again and again until the spark of revelation you received will become a flame of fire and your assurance and convictions over the matter will now grow and glow more and more powerfully in your heart [Isa.32:17].

Romans 12:1-2

In proving [or knowing] who the perfect will of God for you is, you must come to a point of total surrender [Jn.5:30]. The will of God will not come to an unholy person who is living in disobedience to Jesus. Without presenting your body to the Lord as a living sacrifice, you would have given your body to all manner of men or women in fornication and when it is now time to know who God's will is, there will most probably be too many confusion as your heart would have been divided amongst too many people [1Cor.6:16-17 MSG].

The second thing to note before we can talk of knowing God's will is this matter of making sure that you are not conforming to the standards of this present world [Rom.12:2 [GNB, Moffat, Phillips, *MSG].

There is something we need to notice here:

One of the things that obscures or hides the will of God from us is the way the world system has already set our minds [Eph.2:2]. Standards like what the person you are expecting must look like or have are the things that clog our sensitivity and make it impossible for us to hear God. [Ezek.14:2-4, 1Cor.3:19-21]

We will still speak more on this.

LIST OF PEOPLE YOU CANNOT MARRY

- a. Unbelievers. 2Cor.6:14, Deut.7:1-4, Neh.13:23-24.
- b. Divorcees. Lk.16:18, 1Cor.6:9.
- c. Polygamists. 1Tim.3:12, Gen.2:18.
- d. Same sex [homosexuality or lesbianism]. It is confusion. Lev.18:22, 24-25; Rom.1:24, 26-28, 32.

The promise of divine guidance: Ps.32:8-9, Isa.48:17

Specific methods...

a. The quiet voice of the holy God in our spirits. Isa.30:21, Heb.1:1-2

This is the perfect way God wants to use in speaking to us. As we mature in our spirits we will begin to hear the voice of the God clearly in our spirits. The language of the Holy Spirit is the Word of God [our Bible]-Heb.1:1-2

When our spirits are saturated with the Word of God and our souls are soaked in the Word, hearing God clearly in our spirits will be as easy as possible [*Jn.10:1-7].

How to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit from that of demons or our own desires. 1Thes.5:23

i. The spirit:

Intuition [1Cor.2:9-14]. This is the supernatural ability to know or sense spiritual things, independent of our mind, emotion or will. The Temple in the Old Testament

was divided into three partitions. There is the Outer court, the Holy Place [Heb.9:2] and the Most Holy Place [or the Holy of Holies-Heb.9:3-4]. There is no window in the Holy of Holies thus the whole place is supposed to be in darkness since no external light can enter into it however, the room is lighted by the glory of God who sits enthroned above the mercy seat, between the Cherubim [Ex.25:22].

This means the redeemed man is lighted in His spirit by the Lord through this faculty called intuition and his illumination is independent of his mind or human reasoning faculty [1Cor.2:9-10, Ps.18:28].

Communion [Jn.4:23-24]

This is the supernatural ability through which man is able to worship and relate with God [1Jn.1:3]. This faculty is also located in the human spirit since it is the spirit of man that is capable of knowing and interacting with God and the spiritual world. Communion is also independent of *soulish* faculties for the spirit of man is the innermost part of man just as the Holy of Holies is where the revelation of how God is worshipped is released to man [Lev.16:2].

Conscience [Rom.2:15].

This is the faculty in the spirit of man responsible for judging and weighing man's actions. The work of the conscience is independent and direct; it does not bend to outside opinions. The relationship between conscience and intuition is that conscience judges according to intuition [Rom.9:1, Rom.8:16]; it condemns all conduct which does not follow the directions given by intuition. Intuition is related to communion or worship in that God is known by man intuitively and reveals His will to man in the intuition [Jn.4:23-24]. We can conclude then that these three elements of conscience, intuition and communion are deeply interrelated and function co-ordinately.

The spirit-man makes us God-conscious.

ii. The soul: Intellect [Phil.4:8], **emotion** [Ps.119:28], **will** [Jn.7:17].

The soul makes us Self-conscious.

iii. The body: the five senses-eyes, ears, nose, taste & touch [].

The body makes us world [or environmentally] conscious.

The divine order is spirit, soul and body [1Thes.5:23] but the fall of man has distorted the order to body, soul and spirit. At regeneration, a reversal to the original intent is what the Lord did so that we can freely worship God. **God dwells in the spirit, self dwells in the soul, while senses dwell in the body.**

b. Dreams. Job 33:14-17

This is a remedial or secondary means by which God speaks when a man has missed the direct voice of God in his spirit [Isa.42:19-20]. Dreams, like visions and trances are not marks of spirituality because they only come because God has not been able to reach us directly [due to either insensitivity in our spirits or our carelessness and carnality] so he has to look for a remedial means so that we will not miss His will.[Job 33:16-17]

At other times, He speaks through dreams or even visions when our consciousness is suspended. That way, He passes across His will when we cannot argue with it.

c. Visions and trances.

The difference between vision, trances and dreams is that while a dream comes during a period of full unconsciousness [when one is asleep], visions and trances comes during partial unconsciousness.

Also, visions and trances are useful means by which the Lord speaks to us because sometimes, when God reveals His will to us in some matters; it becomes very difficult to even contemplate it, not to talk of agreeing with it. A good example is the vision of Peter in Acts 10:11-20.

We must remember also that the Devil too knows how to show men deceitful visions [Jer.23:16]. Like all the other secondary means, every vision or trance must be subjected to much prayer and the Word of God [1Jn.4:1].

Thus, it is not enough that you had the vision of the sister you said God is speaking to you about and now, she is already a married woman even before you saw your supposed vision! It is clear that such vision or trance is not from the Lord!

d. The Bible [the Word of God].

The Holy Scriptures is also another means by which the Lord speaks. The limitation with it is that what God is saying from the Bible may be subjected to wrong interpretation because of the emotional bias you might have when it comes to a particular brother or sister [1Jn.4:2].

I once made a mistake when I was younger and impatient. I was praying about a sister and I saw Amos 3:3 then I immediately jumped into conclusion that the Lord has approved it. After two years of pain, hurt, regrets and sin; the Lord told me that what He was saying that day was that He was wondering how the two of us will go together when He could see that there will be no basis for agreement!

This is why it is important for you not to be emotionally attached to any issue when you are seeking God's will about that issue on the pages of scripture. You may end up hearing the voice of your own emotions and stamping it with approval as *thus says the Lord*. [Ezek.14:3-4]

e. Inner witness [of peace & joy in your spirit]. Isa.32:17

Even if you are seeing visions, dreams and trances about a brother ... even when several people are saying to you: *yes! We support you and Bro. Ade or Sister Titi*; there is something you will need to check again ...

Are you peaceful about the matter? Is there joy [not excitement or happiness] in your heart about it? The more you look at going with this sister or brother without emotional consideration, are you peaceful about the person and the matter?

The Bible says the work of righteousness shall be peace and its effects shall be quietness and assurance forever ... not for two weeks, a month or even three months. If it is God, as time goes on, what He is speaking to you on will become stronger and stronger. You will become more certain in your convictions and assurances [Prov.4:18].

Sister, was it not after you told the brother *yes* that you lost your peace? How come you are no longer peaceful because you are now in courtship? Since the first time he touched you, you have lost the joy of your salvation but you kept on *patching it* because you are afraid of what the people will say if you break this relationship that is

already founded upon sin! Will you not cry out like David so that the Lord can restore you today [Ps.51:10-12]?

f. Prophecies

There is a misconception in the Church today about who a prophet is or what a prophecy is. In the Old Testament, the prophets were generally foretellers, predicting events God has decreed will happen in the future. However, in the New Testament, prophets are forth-tellers, i.e. people who speak the mind of God over what God is saying today.

In the Old Testament, prophecies could be initiators of actions [e.g Elijah and the widow: 1Kgs.17:9-16], but in the New Testament, it is merely a confirmation of what God has already spoken to the recipient of the prophecy about [e.g Agabus and Paul: Acts 20:22-24, Acts 21:10-13].

Thus, with this in mind, a prophecy that someone else received cannot be the initiator of your relationship [1Cor.14:29, Job 12:11]. It could come as a confirmation, yes but you must never step into the second most important decision of your life only based on what some prophets on a mountain said [Jer.29:8-9]!

In this part of the world, once your mother begins to pester you about marriage, she asks for the names of the prospective candidates and takes them to some prophets either on a mountain or in a Church and whoever they choose for you is now your husband. That is a very dangerous step as none of those Prophets will live with you in your marital home!

Jesus died and the veil of the temple has been torn into two, signifying that every human being can now draw near to God based on the sacrifice and the finished work of Jesus [Heb.4:16]. God has removed the wall of partition between you and Him if you are born again and He delights in you coming to Him by yourself! Why send someone else [Ex.20:18-21]?

g. Circumstances.

When God is unable to speak directly to us probably due to our insensitivity or carnality, circumstances are also, sometimes a very effective way He speaks. It could be

that through a disappointment caused by a brother you are in courtship with, God may be showing you that you are not in His perfect will for your life [Amos 3:3].

David and all Israel, in their excitement to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem used a wrong pattern and it led to the death of Uzzah. After that unfortunate incident, they then consulted the Lord directly, then He told them of His specific will in the matter [see 2Sam.6].

Paul and his co-labourers were going to preach the gospel in several towns God didn't send them to but were met by restrictions upon restrictions until the Lord used the circumstance of a vision to speak to them that He would want them to go Macedonia [Acts 16:6-10].

SESSION THREE

INTRODUCTION...

Hymn: Thou my everlasting portion

1. Thou my everlasting portion,
more than friend or life to me,
all along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with thee.

Refrain:

Close to thee, close to thee,
close to thee, close to thee,
all along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with thee.

2. Not for ease or worldly pleasure,
nor for fame my prayer shall be;
gladly will I toil and suffer,
only let me walk with thee.

(Refrain)

3. Lead me through the vale of shadows,
bear me o'er life's fitful sea;

then the gate of life eternal
may I enter, Lord, with thee.
(Refrain)

If you want to do things the Bible way, you will know that there is nothing like *boyfriend/girlfriend* relationship or dating that will help you to *test if you can go together*. These things are worldly and they were imported from the western culture and not Biblical culture [Rom.12:2, 1Pet.1:14, Josh.23:12-13].

Imagine if you have been a boyfriend or girlfriend to someone and after a long time of emotional relationship, when you now find out that God isn't leading you towards that direction, imagine the emotional damage you will cause for the other person—especially when sexual sin is involved [2sam.13:14-20]!

The biblical pattern before the Lord speaks to you is *let brotherly love continue* [Heb.13:1, 1Pet.1:22, Rom.12:10]. You are not to be biased or treat anyone specially when God hasn't spoken to you and when a courtship relationship is not established. You cannot begin to show emotional affection toward a particular person when you have not heard from God.

CONFIRMATION, PROPOSAL& COURTSHIP

1. Confirmation

Once you have been able to discern the will of God, before you go ahead and propose to a lady or before you go ahead and accept a proposal, there is a need to test and confirm if your convictions are genuine [2Cor.13:5]. How you do this is by subjecting your conviction to the test of time, scriptures and other older Christians.

i. The Test of Time. Isa.28:16 NKJV

You must learn to subject whatever leading you are having to the test of time. There is no point rushing or saying if you don't talk to the sister now or if you don't accept the brother's proposal now, he or she may move on to someone else. The Bible says that

he that believes shall not make haste. We have said it before, if it is God, He will speak again and again [Job.33:14 AMP].

The test of time is not that you are doubting God; instead it is giving the matter enough time in order for the convictions to grow and glow until every doubt, every question and everything unclear is fully answered, not by the effort of man but by the Holy Spirit [1Cor.2:12-13].

When you subject what you are hearing to the test of time [at least between six months to a year], your conviction will become strong and no storm or crisis will shake it in the future. That conviction will become the foundation of your marriage [1Cor.3:11].

We strongly recommend to young men that this period of waiting for the confirmation of time is an ideal period to start looking for an apartment of your own, particularly if you are living with your parents or friends. Prov.24:27, Gen.2:24

ii. The Test of Scriptures.

After you say you are now sure, after you have subjected your conviction to the test of time, can we find two or three scriptures that anchors your conviction [2Cor.13:1]? The moment God confirms it for you in His Word, which is tried in the fire seven times, we are sure it can stand the test of days and years to come [Ps.12:6].

You may dream or fall into a trance... someone can even give you a Word of prophecy or the circumstances that is leading you into this relationship can look genuine... however, when storm arises in the future of the relationship, none of these remedial or secondary means can strengthen your heart nor anchor your convictions like the Word of God [Matt.7:24-25]. This is the major reason why we must anchor our convictions on the authority of His Word.

iii. The Test of Confirmation [by mature Christians or disciplers] 2Cor.13:1,

You need to subject what you are hearing to the confirmation of more matured Christians; not your friends or your classmates who are in the same level with you [1Kgs.12:6-11]. People who have spiritual oversight over your life [like disciplers or the pastors you are under].

Submit it to them. Let them check it out. Let them pray through on the matter. Let them be certain in their own spirits such that they can stand with you before you make a proposal or accept a proposal.

Why this is important is because they have no emotional attachment in the matter. They will most probably hear, think and see more clearly about the matter more than you or your friends who will be merely excited about it.

iv. The confirmation of the other person. Amos 3:3, Gen.24:55-59

No matter what you have heard from God, it is the other person that will confirm or deny it is the other person involved. Conviction must be independent [Jn.4:39-42] and not induced [Prov.19:6, Gen.32:20], obtained by flattery [Rom.16:18] or forced [1Sam.2:16] -because it won't be for your good [Gal.6:7].

If God is speaking to you about a sister and the Lord has not yet spoken to the sister about the same matter, then you have to wait until she has heard from God. This is the final test. Your final assurance is that the other person too has heard from the Lord [Gen.24:61-67].

The Bible says can two walk together except they agree? Thus, until a sister responds to you, *yes I will go*, or *yes, I agree*; that conviction is not yet binding. A relationship has not yet started. No matter how sure you are that God has spoken to you, my brother; the final confirmation is that the sister herself has been led by God into it.

If she said she has prayed but she didn't hear anything, whether she's lying or saying the truth, all it means is that you cannot go ahead on the matter. You must table the matter back in the presence of God [Phil.4:6].

If God now tells you He is still interested in the matter as He is still working on her, it may mean that you went ahead of time. It may mean that you were not properly guided on the perfect timing of God [Eccl.3:1].

Thus, after knowing the right person and subjecting it to the tests, how then do you proceed? Please remember that you must never take any step until you are sure. Never start a relationship until you are certain [Prov.5:21 Amplified Classic, The Message].

2. Proposal

Proposal is simply making your intentions known to a sister that you desire that she will come with you in the journey of life as your wife, help meet and partner for life after you are convinced that she is God's choice for your life [Gen.24:63-67].

It is not what anybody can or should do for you. It is what you must do for yourself.

i. Why the man must propose

It is the man who must propose because he is the one who God has conferred the spiritual leadership of the home on [1Cor.11:3]. Adam made his convictions and desires known to Eve, so brother, if you are too shy to propose and you are only coming around and crowding the sister, you are irresponsible [Gen.2:23-24].

You are a man who is afraid of commitment because you are afraid of being quoted. By tomorrow if things don't go well, such a man can quickly bail out.

When a man is too shy to make proposal, he is too shy to marry.

Sister, if a man cannot say to you and about you that *this is the bone of my bones* and you are the one that quickly went to advertise yourself to him, before God, you will just be another Jezebel or a daughter of Moab who know how to entice men to notice them! The daughters of Moab are the ones who made proposal by their worldly dressing and coming round the men of Israel to be caught by them [Num.25:1].

When you present yourself like that as a cheap commodity, it tells how you will be handled for the rest of your life! No matter how pressurized you are as a woman, no matter the amount of your conviction; it is your responsibility and honour to wait [Gen.24:27-29]. If the person is not responsible enough to make a commitment, how will he provide leadership for you for the rest of your life? Or would you want to marry a puppet that you will be controlling?

When a woman proposes to a man by her actions, such marital relationship will not work. If he hasn't made a commitment and you are the one cooking special food for him, you are buying him shirts and ties; you are going to be in trouble! Any man you bring into your life through such crooked means will never be a head to you. **Now, if your husband is not a head, he cannot be ahead of you and as such you will**

always need to look behind for direction [1Pet.3:6]. May that not be you in Jesus name!

ii. How to Propose.

How do you propose? Do you go there arrogantly because God has spoken to you and you begin to make demands as if you are a husband when you have not even proposed?! For instance, would you go and visit her, check her album and begin to query her about every man in the photographs?

You don't use spiritual intimidation on a sister because you want to propose! You don't threaten her! I remember the case of a young man who told a lady that God told him that if she doesn't marry him, she will never be happily married in life. Today, the sister is happily married and as far as I know, this brother is not even married yet [Lam.3:37].

It is not by going round in circles, asking skeptical questions, making research into her old life, not by tapping into her emotional life with gifts and attention, not by keeping her in perpetual suspense by saying *I need to see you* then when she comes, you now avoid the topic. It is not by any of these ways [Prov.16:25].

It is also not to just keep coming until you overwhelm her. It is not by cajoling her and asking her to guess what you want to say! Christian marriage is not a matter of guessing! It is more serious than guessing!

Don't also go and propose by telling her what the pastor or any other person said. Don't also go there with someone else who will talk for you! No matter who agreed with you, don't begin by telling her what they said.

When it is time, come simply and tell her what your own convictions are and ask her to please pray in order to confirm it. You are asking her to consider if it is God's will for her to go with you on your journey for the rest of her life. Let her have enough time in order to be certain of God's will for her in the matter.

There is no rule about where you should propose. It should be made in an atmosphere of godliness and sobriety and not of infatuation and romance [Gen.29:1-12]. Don't arouse her sexually then you now ask if she will marry you. Don't bring proposal at the

level of intoxication and cajole. Don't come dressing so flashy with expensive phones or cars or clothes. Come simply as you are; be yourself.

iii. Conduct after Proposal.

After you have proposed, don't stand there insisting on immediate answer. There is nothing you are rushing for [Isa.28:16 NKJ]. Personally, I have made mistake in this regard. I insisted, the sister said yes then after six months, she returned and broke the relationship because she took the decision under duress.

Don't put the sister under duress. Give her space to decide. Sisters, it is possible that God has spoken to you several months before the brother comes to make his proposal. It is possible you've been praying and God has spoken to you beyond reasonable doubt but until he comes it cannot begin. Now, when he comes, you may need to pray again before you say your final yes.

iii. How to Respond to Proposals.

Sisters, please in responding to a proposal, your answer has to be articulate and clear. Don't say, *didn't you notice that my attitude has changed since you proposed?* No. No serious minded brother will look up and down for your attitude. He wants to know if you are convinced and he wants to hear how God convinced you!

Before you start visiting him, cooking for him and going about together; put first things first. You must respond clearly by either a yes or a no [Gen.24:58]. A serious minded brother who proposes to you will stay away and will not pressurize you with phone calls, neither will he overwhelm you with gifts so that you can pray clearly and not be confused. Don't say he is not even romantic because he gave you space to pray.

Neither should you leave him in suspense, not saying a yes or a no. some sisters believe that except the brother can beg them well, he is not serious. Christian marriage is not a matter of begging [Gen.2:18-25]. If you already know that the answer is yes, why delay till tomorrow? Why must you keep him in suspense, coming and coming for one year and yet you have not spoken? Do you want to confuse him and make him lose faith in how God has been speaking to him? If you are not sure, tell him you are still praying but don't be sure and yet you keep him in suspense.

So after you have checked and the Lord is not leading you in that direction [not because you are clinging to your standards or to quietly insisting on some beliefs], when you are sure it is not the Lord, please be polite in telling him the truth. Tell him your own convictions respectfully and kindly.

Until the two of you discover that it is God's will for you to go together in life and you make conscious commitments to one another in the presence of God in a place of prayer, your courtship has not started. Don't start parading one another as *the person* to your friends or family members until this commitment is made [Gen.24:58-6].

3. Courtship

a. What is Courtship?

Christian courtship is the time-gap between the day of agreement of a brother and sister regarding God's leading for marriage to each other, and the wedding day when the revelation is practically fulfilled. The period of courtship varies in duration and during this time, the two are not yet married. They are said to be engaged or betrothed to each other [Matt.1:18].

The proper conduct and attitude in courtship

1Thes.4:3-7, Matt.5.27-30, Lk.16:12, 1Tim.5:1-2, 1Cor.3:16-17.

Abstain from fornication. Your partner is God's property, God's temple to be precise and so are you. Treat each other as a brother and as a sister with all purity. Anyone who defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

This period is to prove your faithfulness. Don't destroy your destiny by demanding NOW what you will have a lifetime to enjoy eventually...be holy even as your heavenly father is holy.

b. The purpose of courtship

Christian courtship is not a period of idleness. Since there is a specific purpose in the mind of God regarding courtship, we need to know what it is specifically meant to achieve.

Courtship is a period of conscious preparation of the two lives for the call of marriage. Lk.14:28-29, 1Chron.22:5, Prov.16:1 RSV.

This period should be applied separately and together to call forth, develop and align your hearts towards the fulfilment of God's purpose for your marriage. It is also a period to lay proper a foundation for a singular focus and for mutual trust in God and in each other.

These can be achieved through personal and corporate study of the word of God and prayers combined with very sincere, honest and open discussion together (Gen.2:25).

a. The period of courtship should be used and focused on how to achieve God's purpose of helping the man to accomplish the work God has committed into his hands. Gen.1:28, Gen.2:15-18.

Any home without a focus will quickly fade away in relevance and usefulness. The brother and sister in courtship must individually and corporately seek the face of the Lord in order to discover the purpose for their marriage if they have not yet discovered it (Isa.30:21).

Prayers must be made throughout the courtship coupled with positive and practical steps taken in preparation towards the fulfilment of such purpose. It is often amazing to discover while praying and discussing together that the same call that God revealed to the brother is the same (or very close to or a call that will complement the brother's) is what God had equally given to the sister. This will further confirm God's leading on the matter in both hearts.

b. The period of courtship should be used to prepare for childbearing. Ps.127:3, Gen.1:28, Eph.5:11-13.

It is important that you seek the face of the Lord about your home concerning childbearing as the Holy Spirit may want to reveal to you things to come in this regard [Jn.16:13].

It is not proper to hide any previous lifestyle that might affect child bearing [Gen.2:25]. This is because, as children of the light, it is during courtship that any previous lifestyle that may affect childbearing should be brought up and discussed. It is sinful, evil and dangerous to hide such things at this time, only for the matter to crop

up after the wedding. It is the same with any previous lifestyle that can threaten or destroy the union in future. Since we are saved and old things have passed away, it will not be good that a secret life from the past or repercussions of previous deviant lifestyles crops up and catches the partner unawares. Such things are strong enough to destroy mutual trust in the marital relationship.

Thus, for instance, if the sister has gone through surgical operation that affected the reproductive organs or perhaps an abortion (probably when she was an unbeliever), it should not be hidden. Also, if the brother has had any surgical operation that affected his reproductive organs or perhaps a sexually transmitted disease before, he must not hide it [Jn.3:20-21].

Prayerfully discuss these issues and forgive one another. It may shake the relationship but if it is truly born of God, the relationship will survive it [Ps.125:1, Isa.32:17].

However, if your partner decides to end it at that point, he or she is free, since you are not yet married. It only shows that God may not be the initiator of the whole thing after all; never forget, a broken courtship is always far better than a broken marriage. However, if despite such deficiencies, you are both willing to go ahead, it will only make your commitment to each other stronger and your marriage will last.

iii. Preparation for lifelong partnership and companionship. Eccl.4:9-12, Mal.2:14

The issue of partnership involves losing your personal identity and being lost into each other. It means having a part in each other: in each other's life, career, property, ministerial call and even in each other's problem and difficulties.

Even though the consummation of this starts on the wedding day, a brother and a sister betrothed to each other should start praying and planning towards this especially in terms of total yieldedness, searching scriptures for more light and direction on the matter.

You may also start practicing partnership in courtship especially in the area of material possessions and ministerial calling more so when the wedding is very close. But avoid

partnership of your bodies during courtship! Beware of immorality of all types. Maintain purity of heart and intentions.

iv. Preparation for the production of a godly seed. Matt. 2:15, Eph5 :15-17

God desires that each Christian home will bring forth godly seed, not seeds that will multiply iniquity on the earth. Pray seriously, and plan towards this. Courtship period is not too early to prepare for that.

But more importantly, there is a “godly seed” that God desires, a unique offspring, something godly springing forth from your marriage. That is a project. Pray and prepare towards satisfying this desire of God. And if both of you are able to know it and understand it early in courtship, start preparing for its fulfillment.

v. Preparation towards complete sexual satisfaction in marriage. Prov. 5:15-20

At what point is discussion on this relevant? What are the parameters that give complete sexual satisfaction? Gen.2:23

Avoid discussing anything about this early in courtship lest you become aroused and fall into immorality. Discussion about conjugal relationship and how to achieve sexual satisfaction in marriage should be made just a few days to the wedding. The discussion should be done not by the two of you alone but with an elder you both submit to in counseling. If you fall into any act of immorality even a day to your wedding, it is a sin. Avoid it and stay pure lest you sin against God and against each other, damaging your conscience and your trust in each other. There is time for everything.

In addition, any past experience of sex must be discarded and your mind renewed. This is a new relationship. Also, note that there can be no satisfaction until both of you have become one in spirit and in mind. When there is a disagreement and quarrel, sexual relationship becomes hard and unsatisfying. But the more you build up yourselves in your spirit (your spiritual lives) and then your minds, and in decision-making now and even after wedding, it will be easy to achieve oneness of your bodies and have sexual satisfaction.

Pray towards achieving this in your future home, and purpose in your heart like Daniel, not to defile yourself (sexually).

vi. Preparation towards handling of finances and other resources. Matt. 19:5-6. You must discuss prayerfully and agree on how to handle finances in your home. Pray and start practicing this even if on a small scale without necessarily having a joint bank account.

vii. Preparation towards the wedding project. Col.3:17, 1 Thess.5:22

This is very important because what you have prayed about in the secret is about to be brought about in the open. The name of the Lord must not be blasphemed because of you. Therefore pray and depend on the Lord to help you in every preparation. There must be agreement between you both on every aspect of this project.

This is also the time to visit and know your partner's family. Prepare your partner's mind so that your family members may be favorably disposed towards him/her. You discuss how he/she can behave in order to receive their favor. This does not mean in any way, however, that you should compromise your faith in order to win the favor of men. Seek God for wisdom. It will help remove distractions and unnecessary hardship from those quarters.

c. Handling visits and outings during courtship. Eph.5:11-17, 1 Thess.5:22, Rom.14:16-17

Walk in the light as children of light. Anything that covers or is covered is darkness. Have no fellowship with such works. Each of you must shun every appearance of evil. Anything and any behavior that will make people speak evil about you must be done away with. Even your physical appearance must be modest, not extravagant, and not seductive. Wherever you are and whatever you do, remember that you are in God's presence. His eyes are watching you. He will reward every man according to his deeds.

i. Determine the duration of visits. What should be the duration of visits?

Gen.3:16, Gal.3:13, Matt.6:21.

Though there may be no binding law about the frequency of visits, every visit must be tangible purpose. An idle visit is normally the devil's opportunity. Avoid it. Ensure that you are delivered from the desire of your partner. It is a curse (Gen.3:16).

But Christ has redeemed us from that curse. Our desire must be for the Lord. If you discover that your heart is always desiring and thinking about your marriage partner, be careful and pray. The devil may be at the corner. If Christ is your treasure more than that brother or sister, your heart should be with Him. Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also.

ii. Hour of visit [day or night]. 1 Thess.5:5, Jn.11:9-10

Avoid visiting each other in the evening or night time as much as possible. The devil works more at night, even in the physical night. Your night may become the opportunity he is waiting for, to trap you.

iii. Is it appropriate to meet in the presence of a third person? Eph.5:12

Avoid secrecy. Things done in the secret are shameful. You must be transparent enough to outsiders as you relate with each other. Let your good not be evil spoken of.

When you get married then you can be free to meet with your partner alone any time.

iv. Place and conduct of visit. Eph.5:12, Phil.1:27, 1 Cor. 6 :18-20, 1Tim. 4:12

Avoid meeting together behind closed doors or locked doors. If you are living far apart and you need to travel to see each other, arrange to lodge with another trusted person, not with your fiancé or fiancée. Be an example to believers in your conduct with each other. Do only those things and those discussions you can do in the name of the Lord. Let your discussions be more on spiritual matters, issues that will aid you in preparing for the fulfillment of God's purpose for your future home.

Avoid discussions that have some romantic or immoral suggestions that may lead to sexual arousal. Remember that in the sight of God; even a lustful look at a woman (or

man) is counted as weighty a sin of immorality as the act of immorality itself. Be holy in all your conduct. You will receive honour from God.

Note that God commands us to flee fornication, not just to stand there trying to resist it. Flee!

d. Parental Consent

What is the significance of obtaining the consent of the parents on both sides before wedding?

Gen.24:50-51, 59-61, Eph. 6:1-3, Rom. 12:18, Prov.21:1.

Parental consent must be carefully and prayerfully sought for before going ahead for the wedding. It is an honour due the parents. When you honour them this way, it has a way of securing long life according to God's promise. Their agreement or disagreement may also act as confirmation of the will of God and the timing of your marriage even if they are unbelievers. Pray and relax. Release your life and heart into God's hands over the matter. If truly it is His will and timing, God will convince the parents to give their consent.

Waiting for parental consent could also be an opportunity to prove your commitment to each other. Don't rush.

An adage says that what you will eat for life, you don't need to rush to eat it. Each one of you must be patient.

e. Payment of Dowry [Bride Price]

i. Payment of Dowry is biblical

Gen.24:50-53, Gen.29:18, Ex 22:16-17; 1 Sam. 18:23-27,

1Cor. 6:19-20, 1 Pet.1:18-19.

- (a) Payment of bride-price is biblical. It has even before the law and it is the practice in many cultures. There was a bride price paid to have Rebecca married to Isaac. Jacob served his father-in-law for Leah and Rachael. David paid dowry for Michal (Saul's daughter) with 200 Philistine foreskins

though the father demanded for 100; and Jesus paid with His blood to have the church for Himself as His bride.

Unless the parents refuse to take any dowry, it is a necessary part of the process of getting married. It also serves as a token of the agreement between the two families concerning the marriage. On no occasion should a Christian run away with a girl (or a man) in the name of marriage without settling the bride price. It is unbiblical.

(b) How should a Christian handle unrighteous demands made as part of a dowry in the name of tradition? Jas. 1:5, Prov. 21:1.

In case of unrighteous demands being made or very high bride price is being demanded by the girl's parents, wisdom and patience is needed in handling it in order not to compromise. While the bride and the groom prayerfully discuss with their parents over it, such issues should not be used as an occasion to insult or dishonor their parents. There is no heart however hard that God cannot break. The heart of king is in God's hands, and as streams of water, He turns it whithersoever He wills. God will make a way for you. Wait on and for the Lord.

f. When should spiritual leaders or disciplers be involved?Rom.13:7, Heb.13:17.

There is no rule about this. Each church or fellowship group has its own tradition about it. But do it as early as possible so that your leaders can also pray for you, counsel you and help you when necessary.

g. How long should a courtship last?Heb. 10:35-39, Isa. 52:12, Rom.8:14.

Courtship is not a period of idleness. There is a definite purpose that must be sorted out. Be patient. The period of courtship is also useful in subjecting your decision to be married to each other, to a test of time. Do not rush. You may live to regret it if you rush.

However, courtship must not be unnecessarily prolonged. Watch your relationship. Watch the spiritual and physical preparations. Watch God's timing. You can be led of

the Holy Spirit even in this. But never forget that courtship is not marriage. Until you are married, you are not married.

h. Can one be involved in courtship with more than one person at the same time? 1 Cor. 14:33.

A situation in which a brother or a sister tries to play a game of chance by being in courtship with more than a person at the same time is wrong and unbiblical. It is ungodly. It is also a sign of uncertainty and unbelief about God's will and choice. God is not an author of confusion.

i. On What ground should the courtship be discontinued? 1 Cor. 5:11; Matt. 18:19.

Proven immorality that is current, backsliding and uncertain about the agreement to be married to each other are all grounds on which courtship can be discontinued or at least suspend until there is a definite change.. broken based on the agreement of the two to break it for whatever reason.

It must be noted here that courtship is not a binding relationship. It can be broken. But once married, God says, "I hate divorce" Mal. 2:16.

SESSION FOUR

INTRODUCTION...

Hymn: Thou my everlasting portion

1. Thou my everlasting portion,
more than friend or life to me,
all along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with thee.

Refrain:

Close to thee, close to thee,
close to thee, close to thee,
all along my pilgrim journey,
Savior, let me walk with thee.

2. Not for ease or worldly pleasure,
nor for fame my prayer shall be;
gladly will I toil and suffer,
only let me walk with thee.

(Refrain)

3. Lead me through the vale of shadows,
bear me o'er life's fitful sea;

then the gate of life eternal
may I enter, Lord, with thee.
(Refrain)

PLEASE NOTE: The sermon notes from this section downwards is culled from PeaceHouse teaching manual on courtship and premarital issues titled: BUILDING A FULFILLING MARITAL RELATIONSHIP.

CHRISTIAN WEDDING

Jdentifying the incidence of a wedding ceremony in each of the following passages of scriptures: Jn. 2:1-2, Gen. 24:54, Matt. 22:2-4, Rev.19:7-9.

Wedding involves inviting families, friends and well wishers to the occasion of the coming together of a man and a woman in marriage. It also involves some form of feasting and rejoicing as it happened in each of these scriptures and it will also happen in the kingdom of God at the wedding of the lamb. Will you be there?

1. What is the significance of Christian wedding (Church solemnization) and wedding feast in Christian marriage? Jn. 2:1-2, Col. 3:17, 2 Cor.13:1.

Basically, Christian wedding is meant for the purpose of public Christian witness of your marriage.

It is expedient that after settling the bride price even though you have secretly previously involved Jesus Christ and His disciples in your relationship, they must now be publicly invited and involved for the following reasons:

- (a) As a public testimony to the church. Marriage must not be covered up. It must be done in the presence of witnesses so as to make it established.
- (b) To receive prayer and blessing s from the Lord and church. Ps.133:1-3, Matt. 18:18-20.

- (c) To worship, praise and rejoice before God with the couple. Rom. 12:15.
- (d) As an opportunity to reach out to the unsaved. Eccl.11:5-6, 2 Tim.4:2, Eph. 5:15-16.

The preaching of the gospel is our commission in order to save the lost. Every opportunity we have must be used for that purpose. It must be our life style.

- (e) To share together in physical things in love with the couple at the wedding feast. Jn. 2:1-2, Heb.13:16, Eph5:15-16.

Where possible, wedding feast and sharing together of food (and gifts) with the couple is biblical. It does not have to be flamboyant and extravagant but modesty must be the watch word. Rom.12:16, 1 Cor.8:13, 1Cor10:31-32.

However, where the couple cannot afford the feasts, (not the wedding itself), it can be avoided. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom.14:17.

2. What is the actual scriptural relevance of the following:

- (a) Wedding dresses.** Rev.19:7-8.

For the bride, the white dress signifies righteousness, including her being a virgin. It typifies the dress with which the bride of the Lamb is clothed. If used with sincerity it is good.

Good as that is, however, it is not compulsory. More so that it will be a mockery for a bride to be so clothed externally but so rotten internally. That is convinced by the Lord to do.

- (b) Wedding cake**

Though many find some scriptures to explain the significance of this in wedding feast, the scriptural basis of its necessity is not clear. Everyone must be sure of the leading of the Holy Spirit in whatever he does.

3. What should be avoided at a Christian wedding ceremony?

- (a) Alcoholism-** Prov.31:4-5, Rev.1:6, Isa.5:11-12.

We (children of God) have been made kings and priests unto God. It is not for kings to drink wine. No matter the reason, alcohol intake should be avoided. Drinking of alcohol does not add to your spirituality. It rather lowers it. But avoidance of alcohol intake is not contrary to life or godliness. It rather encourages it. You can do without it. And you should.

(b) Worldly music/ cultural and idolatrous dance troupe. 1 Jn.2:15-17, Jas. 4:4, 1 Thess5:22, 1 Cor. 15:33, Matt.15:3, 8-9.

This must be avoided in Christian feasts. Rather see what we are admonished to do in Jas.5:13, Eph.5:18-20.

The Christian life is a complete lifestyle in itself. There are enough Psalms and spiritual songs in the scriptures that we can sing. There is no need to borrow the lifestyle of the world to accomplish kingdom purpose. It is expedient to avoid it.

(c) Ostentation (that is to, show of wealth) Rom.12:16, LK.20:46-47, Ps.138:6, 1 Pet.5:5-6, Phil.2:5-9.

There must be no show, no ostentation. Let the attitude of Christ be in you. He is not proud. Though He is God, He lived humbly without any show of self.

(d) Borrowing I order to meet the needs of a Christian wedding. Heb.13:5-6, 1 Tim.6:6, Deu.15:6, Prov.22:7.

Lack of contentment, covetousness and shame is what makes many Christians to go into borrowing in order to have their high taste met in their wedding feast. It is a wrong spiritual attitude that must be dealt with. Whatever God provides is enough. Nothing should make a child of God ashamed of using what God has provided just because it appears too little. Be content. Godliness with contentment is, and brings great gain.

4. When does the pair actually become married?

(a) Traditionally?

When the bride has been duly paid as already discussed before, the pair becomes traditionally married, with or without legal court notification.

(b) Scripturally?

After the bride price, a Christian surely needs the blessing of the Lord and His disciples as discussed above. It may not necessarily be a big, flamboyant ceremony but it is important. You may not need to spend any money to have this done but as much as possible, get it done. Christian marriage must not be done in such haste as to stop and conclude and consummate the marriage at the traditional level. He that believes in the Lord shall not act hastily. Isa. 28:16.

CONCLUSION

Purity and purposefulness is the principal thing to ensure in courtship. During this time, you have to consciously put your emotions in hold by the grace of God. For the grace of God that brings salvation ... teaches us to say 'no' to sin and to all ungodliness. Tit.2:11-12. By the grace of God, the time to release your emotions will soon arrive. The purpose for which you are getting married should be addressed in courtship and its pursuit commenced right early.

Are you involved in courtship with an unsaved person, or someone whose salvation is doubtful? Break it now. It is not yet late. A broken engagement is better than a broken marriage.

How pure is your courtship and how properly ordered is it? You must make amends from today. Are you already married in error? Your hands are tied, for God hates divorce [Mal.2:16], but the Lord offers relief [Matt.11:28-29].

Turn it over to Jesus.

May you arise from this study to obey God's word that it may be well with your soul.

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