

## Singleness in the Light of Marriage

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December 20, 1997

I'm glad to be with the whole bunch of you here. Hopefully, we'll have a valuable time, and I think it will be valuable maybe not in ways you imagined, but the Lord takes value in times like this. When we gather together, especially young people, we can talk frankly. I've got a bunch of questions that already have come in, and I expect some more in by email any moment now. So we're going to try to deal with some of these questions, and you'll see where I'm coming from pretty soon. And then afterwards, I asked Brother William where I stand, if he had some mineral oil, and he asked why, and I said because after the young people tar and feather me, I need something to get the tar off of my body. These are difficult days we're living in, so to try to find God's will is made that much more complicated. These things are true. And so I think it's good if we begin with a word of prayer, and then we'll proceed apace.

*Lord, we do thank you so much we can gather together, and we're so glad that we're in Christ. And in that sort of security we proceed forth and desire to have your wisdom displayed among us today as we share our burdens and concerns. We thank you, Lord, that you know these things really before we ask them, but it's in the asking that we get the things flushed out in the open. So we're thankful, Lord, and pray that that which comes out in the open can be ministered to by light. You are the light of the world, and surely to us who believe you are the one who directs our pathway. And so indeed we press on and look to you even with a certain desperation asking, Lord, please, do lead us in the way, the truth, and the life. We pray in Jesus' precious name, Amen.*

I think maybe the best thing for me to do, just give you a sampling of the email that's come in on these questions. Now, what I'm going to do, actually these aren't emails, somebody gave them to me like this. But I'm going to read all of the questions that we have so far before I get down to some answers, because you just ought to see the questions. The questions are half the fun.

Question 1: How come it seems that in all Christian marriages, the woman seems stronger than the man? Now, that is, she's more aggressive, more assertive, and more able. Not to say that this is a prescription of all marriages, but this is what we see a lot of, and we find this a bit disconcerting. How does or doesn't this tie in to I Corinthians 11, about head covering and submission?

Question 2: What should be the purpose of marriage? Now, surely two people must/should love each other, but certainly that not ought to be the end or is it? Of course, they ought to be a representation of Christ and the church, but what does that really mean?

Question 3: Now I sincerely have a desire to be kept for the Lord, meaning that I do not want to

date or be with anyone until He deems it to be the right time. But as a young person with raging hormones, I find the temptation of going out with guys, and even reciprocating affections to guys very strong. How should I handle such times? How ought I deal with crushes? I'm not sure if I'm spiritual enough to pray about them yet. Practically, help me!

Question 4: Given that this period of time, premarriage, is for singleness unto the Lord, how should a brother and a sister handle waiting on God? If they have already expressed mutual interest in each other, but are not yet out of school, i.e. college, and have not had confirmation from the Lord that they are to be, what should they do? In waiting, what does that entail practically? Practically, meaning in daily life, in the routine of the days, in the real world?

Question 5: Let's say that a brother and a sister who've been seeing each other with the intention of marriage, are now in a long distance relationship. Now before, they were in the same locale. How okay is it if the sister wants to follow the brother to where he is? Would it be a stumbling block? Everyone knows about them but they're not engaged. But by okay, we mean to ask if it is against any biblical truths. If it is, where is it in the Bible?

Question 6: How do you know when something is your desire vs. God's intention for you? Can we differentiate between what He tells us and what we want for ourselves? Sometimes it seems like something is so loud and so obvious and so close to us, it's difficult to know His desire and will. In such cases, what should we do, and how should we handle our inability?

Question 7: Do you believe brothers and sisters can be good friends without desires for something more? If so, why? If not, why not? How close friends can a brother and sister be if they know that they are just friends? If people start seeing them as an item, if they've done nothing to invite such a perception except by being friends, should they refrain from their friendship? Where does one draw the line? Whose fault is it that such occasions arise? What ought to be done and why?

Question 8: Let's say that you've been pursued persistently by a certain brother/sister and that you are clearly not interested in him. Now you've shown this person through body language and very few words. What other measures are to be taken without hurting this brother/sister? How should situations like this be handled without endangering body life if it hasn't already?

Now, first I should explain why I cannot answer these questions. Then I will try to answer them. First of all, I can't answer these questions because only Shirley Woods can answer these questions. Does that surprise you? Only officially recognized matchmakers in the body of Christ can handle these questions. Now, that's not me. Why are you asking me these questions? Number two, my own

example is not to be followed. I was a complete disaster in this whole business of dating, courtship and marriage because I married my wife who was a backslidin' Christian, and I wasn't a Christian. Basically, all my motives were wrong, all hers were wrong. It's only the mercy of God that now, 36 years later, we're still together. If you use me as an example, then all of you need to marry unbelievers. I wouldn't recommend that. But let me now explain a little bit more why I think I can't answer these questions: because the answers would be, as the questions are, too complex. It's unfortunate, but it's true. All of us are guilty of this, and once you get married, you're still guilty of this. Unfortunately, we've been dipping from the tree of knowledge of good and evil for too long, and it's become a continual part of our lives, a certain connivance, that even in asking questions, we are looking for handles so that we can control our own lives. I'm just being honest with you about this. You know, marriage happens. Love happens. And the best thing I can read to you, because I think it's the most something Jesus would say if you had Him cornered here getting ready to tar and feather Him, He'd probably say something along this same line. So I'm going to say it, too. Let's just take Matthew 6:25 and read on. Apply to the situation (*NKJ version*).

**Matthew 6:** 25 Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 So why do you worry about (marriage) clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the fields which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more (marry) you, O you of little faith?

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we (marry), who shall we find, how shall we drink (him)?'

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Now, that's the answer. I'm going to try to answer the questions. But I want you to know, that that's the answer. Let me tell you about marriage. The best definition I ever heard about marriage is:

Marriage is the art of living with the wrong person. Now that's marriage. Now, if you're looking for the right person, you're in a lot of trouble. Because what happens is, it's true in the cosmic quarters of God's eternal predestination, marriage is made in heaven. But for all purposes, you make the marriage work here on earth. I'm telling you what's the truth. If you are in Christ Jesus, and you love the Lord God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, I can match you up right now with a brother or a sister, and you can make the marriage work. Because marriage is learning to live with the wrong person. What does that mean? Because once you get married, you realize, "how did I ever marry this clod?" Suddenly, all the things you thought, turned out to be. It doesn't make any difference. Now you look at your own parents. Now, how did they get married? Oh, well they were really pursuing the Lord, weren't they? Very spiritual people. Oh, yeah. Well, then probably the old matchmakers down at the village put them together. Or somebody in the church kinda scrambled them into getting married to each other. And then there were all of your moms. Now, they were all wearing all that silk stuff that those Chinese girls wear and look so beautiful. Totally threw those guys off and thought they were beautiful. Then, of course, they got married, took off the silk stuff and whoh! You know what I'm saying? Basically, no matter what culture you ever find, courtship is a deception. You put on your brightest face. You act like, you know, you got a guy, you kinda like the guy, he likes football, of course you love football, till after you get married. Then the truth comes out. And you realize, somewhere along the line, you're married to the wrong person. Now don't override that. But what I'm saying is marriage involves bearing a cross where you often don't get your way. And if you don't have the guts to work it out, you won't make it in America today. Because in America, you'll be rich enough and famous enough, you can get divorced, and you can both still live. See, that's what I mean. This whole world's gotten too complex. Back in the old days, it's simple. A husband and a wife, if they divorce, they could never make it. The children would starve. The husband couldn't live. For financial necessity, a parental necessity, a cultural necessity, they remained together, and they worked it out. Today, it's too complex. And if you want to work out the will of God, you're gonna have to do a lobotomy on all the cultural stuff that's going on today and live in Christ. And I'm telling you it's a real simple thing. Nobody's ever gonna get married that's not gonna have to bear the cross. Now it's true. Some people marry, and they're more compatible. Some people married, and it's like they're star-crossed. It's because the people who fight the most in their marriages are the people who married somebody the most like themselves. That's when they really fight, like cats and dogs.

You know, you got those four basic kinds of temperament. Everybody here's taken Psych 101. You know, they got four basic temperaments. And when they're matching them up, see this is how the world matches up. They say, well, if you're a phlegmatic person, well now you can marry a melancholic person. What are the four kinds? There's melancholic, there's phlegmatic, there's choleric, and, the outgoing one, sanguine. Those are the four kinds of temperament personalities.

Now, there are certain combinations that work. Especially if you have an aggressive one and a passive one. See, that works. But now what happens if you get two choleric? Two choleric are two forceful people, and they get married. Boy, the fur is flying. Every night you listen in their room, claw, claw, fur flying.

Listen, that's just recreation for choleric people. Don't take it serious. If a choleric can't fight, he hasn't had a good day. See, some combinations work, and some combinations, you're asking for it. But either way, you got to bite the bullet, and accept the cross. Listen, hey, you see, marriage happens.

Now like for your parents, maybe you think they were spiritual giants seeking the Lord and everything. Nah, nah, they were looking around just like you. And maybe they're in a little different context and everything, but you know what, somehow it all worked out. We'll talk about that in just a minute, but anyway, do you understand? The only answer one can really give regarding questions like this is an answer that you could give in rural China as well as here. Okay, that's the only true answer. There's only one answer. It's a very simple thing. The Lord says it's very simple. Now, you know, some of you, I think, would almost opt to go back to rural China. It'd be so much simpler. First of all, your choice would be, there's about three bozos within fifteen years of your age to marry anyway. Now, the fields eliminated, you see what I'm saying. You got three guys. Well, let's see. I want the tall nerd who always goes, "duh." I want the short, fat guy. Or the guy in the middle. The guy in the middle maybe's the best. These are your options. And anyway, it makes no difference. Because your mama's gone over there to talk to the person, and they're working out negotiations, and they all figured it out before you were six years old. So the happy day comes, you meet the person, that's it. And you know what, you get married, and if you're in Christ, you learn to live with it, make the marriage work, and you live happily ever after.

Now some of you, that's beyond your credibility to believe. Because the further you get into American culture, the more you get into opera singing: Me Me Me Me, Me Me Me Me, Me Me Me Me Me Me Me Me Me Me. And the further you get into opera singing, the harder it is to be satisfied with You You You You You You You You You You. See? So now, a dear friend of mine, a precious young person, some of you persons may know the guy, Isaac Jacob. He's now like 27 years old. He's just about to get his Ph.D. in engineering, and even this week, maybe even today, I think, he is flying over to India to marry this Christian girl. He's a good Christian man. He met her twice. A half hour one time and an hour and a half another time. He's going over there to marry this girl. She just finished medical school. She's a doctor. She's a Christian. She loves the Lord. Now all they got's pictures of each other and an hour and a half of conversation. Now they're getting married. Now the parents have talked it over, prayed about it, and they've talked to brothers and sisters at the fellowship there in India and this and that, and you know what, they're going to get married. And you know something, it's going to work out because they both say hey, you know we might have to

die, but we're going to make this marriage work. That's all you have to say, and you'll die, and the marriage will work. End of story. And they had the matchmakers doing the whole thing. Now, he had a choice. You know, there's a couple of women out there, and they said, well, why don't you pray about this one, why don't you pray about that one, and you know, they prayed and sent a letter to her back and forth, and boom, that's it. Now you say, it's not going to work for me. Okay, then be more complicated. But I'm telling you, in the end, this thing's going to involve basic trust, or you're not going to make it.

### **Two-dimensional Questions, Four-dimensional Answer**

Let me give you another point about this thing. The reason I can't answer these questions, and like I said, I'll try to answer them. A question is always two-dimensional. The answer is always four-dimensional. Questions always have length and height. It's the length of your own personal passions and wishes. Perhaps it's the width of your own mental desire for a methodology. Length, width. Let's see, how do we measure length and width? Let's see now. All right, here we go. See, we've got this little pen here. Now, just think about this now. Now, we've got length. Length is the length of my passions, or if you're a more mental person, intelligent person, length is the length of your own knowledge and methodology. I want a methodology. How do I go about marriage? And all these questions that are on this line, right here. Now, there's also a width. Now, there's the width, right there. It's the width of your passion, or for some of you, it's reversed. All right. This is the width of your passion. This is the length of your knowledge. But in any case. All of these questions are like this. And because they're two-dimensional, you can't answer two-dimensional question because the answer is four-dimensional.

Now, what's the third dimension we didn't mention here? Well, I'm going to call it height. Height is the third dimension. See, there's depth. If you can't see, although you know behind, you know, there's something behind there. Let's call it height for now, because there's a fourth one yet to come. And what is the height of your life? What is that that gives you stature? Some don't even realize it. You don't because it's part of your givens. It's part of your presumptions. But your height is in proportion to the amount of covering and relationship you have with other people, namely, your parents, your church, even your culture. And this gives you height. Ask a two-dimensional question, and I've got to answer it. And already I've got a third-dimension on there which has a lot to do with this. How much do you interrelate to your parents? The more you do, the more they're involved in your marriage. Some kids have to go it alone. Their parents want nothing to do with them. They don't relate to them. They don't relate to who they're going to marry. They don't care about it at all. And they're out on their own. We're talking about covering here. There's a whole dimension of height involving covering. Well, now do you just want to go out on your own, scout for your own husband or wife, and that'll be it. You don't care about your covering? You don't care about your

family? You don't care about your culture? Wrong. Then that just reduces your stature to that. You might think because you went to college, or because you graduated from high school that you're a big, tall, strong person, and you know everything that you should know. But, I tell you what, the older you get, the more you say, "Man, the more wisdom that I can get from other people, the safer I am." That's your covering. You have covering. You may even at times despise the intervention of your parents, but thank God you got parents willing to meddle with your life. Some people don't have that. You know, some people, even as Christians, basically are uncovered except for the Lord Jesus because they don't have a fellowship that's willing to pray with them about it. They don't have elders who are willing to give their opinions, and they don't have parents who are Christians. They're out there alone. They got to find somebody like this. They have no help. Now, the third dimension involves parents, involves culture, and involves covering in the church. And the more you're related to them, sorry, the more they're involved in your decision. Now if you want to unrelate with them so that you can go find your own person, go ahead, and you'll make a big mistake. That's just what the enemy wants you to do. Be uncovered; he's got you.

Well, I haven't mentioned the fourth dimension. Where am I getting my dimensions from anyway? From Ephesians Chapter 3. It says we have to learn to comprehend the love of Christ, and it talks four dimensions. I want you to show me the fourth dimension on this thing right here. You remember those four dimensions? In Ephesians 3:18: "May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." So now we've got depth. All right. Now we've got length. We've got width. Okay, now we got this third one we talked about. It's a dimension you almost got to see like this way if you want to see it. Now we got height that I just kinda mentioned. But where's the depth of this. Show me the fourth dimension on this. You see, there's a whole unseen dimension. Now that has to do with the will of God and His purpose and His plan for your life. And you can't even show me where it is on this pen. And yet, the fourth dimension is the one that's going to make the decision for you. See, you don't believe that because you don't think that God is powerful enough to do His will in your life. That's why you need to hear Matthew 6:25—why are you worrying, do you think you can add one inch or find one guy by striving, worrying, not sleeping, trying to lose five pounds, or wearing Chinese silk? The fourth dimension is the will and purpose of God, and God has a purpose and will for your life that He will shape in part through marriage, and for a few of you, through not marriage. And through the sufferings of it, and through the blessings of it, and through the cross of it, He is going to develop something in your life that He can use, that will bear testimony of Himself in some way through your life. When somebody looks at you and your husband or you and your wife, they are going to see something of Christ by the time God's done working with you. Or you're not going to be married, and you're always going to have wanted to be married, and God's going to have a purpose in that, and through that suffering, you're

going to find Him in a deeper way.

I'm going to say two startling things to you but it's only because I'm a realist, and I'm sorry if it does startle you. There's likely to be, can't guarantee it, there's likely to be somebody in this room who will die before they get married. Now you got today to live, and you don't know about tomorrow. Now if you live your life preoccupied with marriage, you may miss the boat completely about what God's will is for you anyway. As I mentioned last night, there's a 23-year-old boy who's a Christian. He fell away from the Lord, he came back to the Lord, and over the last six months he was pursuing and growing in the Lord. And he met a girlfriend, and he was starting to fall in love, and he smashed into a tree at 90 miles an hour and killed himself. He's up in heaven. He'll never be married, and I'm not even going to talk all about the will of God and everything underneath that great mystery of tragedy. But I'm just gonna say that you don't have any guarantees, and you're a fool to worry about something that you think should be a guarantee. You should say, "If the Lord wills," because you don't know.

Could I just address something from last night that I mentioned? Some of you weren't here last night, but we were talking about the life of Job, and the testing that Job went through. Job was being perfected in patience. The word of the Scripture that I used as the theme is "Be patient until the coming of the Lord." Now I don't know if that applies to this or not. What do you think? Be patient, verse seven and eight of James Chapter 5, and verse eight says, "Be patient. Establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Now the Lord's after something in your life, but your going to have to be patient. Now listen to Job. The second point that I made about Job was this. You see, throughout the book of Job, a name of God is written on our hearts with a clarity that is seen in no other place in the Old Testament. That is the name, El Shaddai, because El Shaddai is used 31 out of the 48 times in the Old Testament in Job. El Shaddai means "God-Sufficient," "God-My Satisfaction." It means "God of the Breast," meaning the mother's breast. I'm satisfied in God. Now Job went through a time where everything was stripped away by Satan, and the question came with every stripping, "Are you still satisfied with God?" If I take away your health, are you satisfied with God? Is He enough? That's what it means. Is He enough? If you don't get married, is He enough? If you have trouble all your life with health, is He going to be enough? If you marry some guy, and he doesn't turn out to make you rich, is He enough? And every Christian in some way will be tested on that. Believe me. You'll get down to this equation. It's you and God. Is that enough in your life? Some of you, before you get married, you're going to be tested, because you're not going to get your immediate prayers answered, and God's going to say, now, am I enough? There's some people who live single and serve the Lord all their lives, desiring to be married, but never finding the mate, and they have to answer that question every day, "Is God enough?"

Now what did Job say in answer to that question? Everything was stripped away. You know he lost his family, he lost his job, he lost his reputation, he lost everything. And when this question came to

him, El Shaddai came and said, “Am I still El Shaddai to you?” Of course, God didn’t ask that question, but with the dialogue going on you could see that this was the question underneath the whole thing of Job’s struggle. At one point, Job almost got there but he said this, “Yes, you are enough if I can have You and the answer to my question.” God said, “No, am I enough?” You say, “Well, just one question. You see, I’ve been dipping from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil so long, I just got to know why, why. Just give me an answer, why, why? How do I do this? What do I do? Tell me, tell me, why, why, why, why, why.” God says, “Am I enough?” You say, “Yeah, you’re enough if you’ll just answer this question.” And of course, the answer is, God never answered his question. But God came and appeared before Job and that killed Job’s question. Because when God showed up, Job fell down on the ground and repented and said, “Forgive me for even asking questions. You’re a loving, merciful, all-sufficient God. Forgive me for even asking questions.” But of course, see, we who dip from the tree, we always have to ask questions. There’s a bit of connivance in it, you see. So the Lord may just shut you up. How many times did he have to turn to the disciples who said, “Wha, Wha, what about this one?” Jesus said, “Shut up. You serve me.” Remember that? It’s the end of the gospel of John. “Wha, Wha, What about this guy?” Shut up. You serve me. No answer. I don’t know if you could handle a guy who’s that mean. But you see, when He doesn’t answer your question, He’s out after something more in you. If He answered your question, then you would be a little bit more in control of your life, and you wouldn’t have to trust Him. Oh, how we want to be God. You know, questions are ways of us becoming God. I hope you understand that. Anytime I got an answer, I got power. Anytime I got no answers, I got to trust. What position does God want you in? So, thank God that you have questions because it just shows us what sinners we are. It really does.

Okay, so we got a fourth dimensional thing, and the fourth dimension’s the most important part. And that’s why I’m telling you. I telling you, you can count on it as sure as sparks fly upwards. God’s going to lead you to the person you should marry. There’s another reason I can’t tell you how the thing works out methodologically. Because it does not. Every situation is different. See, sometimes you got parents involved, sometimes you got culture involved, sometimes you got the church involved, sometimes you don’t, sometimes you’re in college, and you meet somebody. You know what I’m saying. If we took all your parents and asked how they all met, well, the answers might have certain categories that are similar, but the way it happens is different in every case. Now how can you make a two-dimensional answer to satisfy a four-dimensional situation? I hope you understand what I’m saying. See, reality is four-dimensional. Theory is two-dimensional. Do you want theory? I’ll give you theory. This is how you should meet your husband. It’s not gonna work that way. Just ask Mike and Shirley. But anyway, has Shirley talked to you about this? On marriage and everything? Next time she comes, ask her. She’ll give you all the answers. I’m telling you, she’s good about that.

The fourth reason is difficult to answer the situation, but that it makes it all the more important to be in the will of God, is this: every one of these questions almost assumes the thing that the young people assume, and that when you get older, you don't assume so much. In theory, you know something that you don't know enough in experience because you still live in the hot house; you live in the green house; you're being cared for by a lot of things. And here is what you don't fully fully recognize. If we lived in a neutral world, you could go about picking and choosing and finding methodologies. But we don't live in a neutral world. The very complexity of the American dating/courtship situation is enough to cause the hen and the cock who are trying to court each other to spin into confusion and fall on the ground. You know how birds, they court each other. The cock just spreads his feathers like this, and the hen calls back, "Get outta here! Get outta here!" He comes out and (cock-a-doodle-doo). She goes, "Bock-bock, bock, bock!" and they dance around for awhile. For the animals, it's so simple. In the United States, it's so complicated that any bird who tries to dance will fall with dizziness. This is not a situation that's neutral. The American culture is fallen in sin and lust and corruption. And everybody who lives in America more than five years has been tainted by the spirit of this age in America. And it's full of sin, almost as sinful as in China, but not quite because America's still younger than China. Give it more years, it will become just as corrupt. There is no culture free from sin. And all of the cultural things involved are also full and stained with sin and manipulation. And we don't live in a neutral environment. It's irrelevant to talk as if these questions were scribed in a neutral environment because questions are asked out of context that is corrupt, and therefore, the answers have to bypass something, and plead for the will of God to be done. Do you understand what I am saying? I don't know how much more I can spell this out without getting into a lot of trouble. But the devil is out to get you. If the devil can do this to you, then there's a chance you could marry somebody who'll kill you. I'm serious. Don't you think you live in a neutral environment. Don't you think just 'cause some guy's coming to you and giving you overtures about how nice you are and can't live without you. That doesn't mean diddly-squat. There's a spirit in this world that's out to corrupt and dominate, do all kinds of things. And unless you understand your height, you're going to be in trouble. And unless you allow the depth to do it's work, you can short-circuit. And that's why, even in the body of Christ, why do we have people who get divorced? Why? Were these marriages made in heaven? Well, some people weren't willing to bear the cross and work things out. But some people just got in a position where they were out of the will of God, and they married for passion, whatever. And when it gets to the point that if a woman is being physically abused to the point that if she stays there, she'll lose her life, is a tragedy that's happened here. And because we don't live in a neutral world, it's good if you have the fear of God in you.

Tell you, I hate to report tragedies, but I've married some people who've got divorced, and I feel the sting of every one of them. As far as I'm concerned, I don't want to marry anybody again. That is, be

part of the ceremony ever again, unless I'm convinced that they'll live till the death together. That's why I don't marry people. You know, they figure a preacher, you just give the guy a hundred bucks, he'll marry you. I don't do that. No siree. Because the blood's on my hands. I'm not going to bear testimony to something that's shallow, something that's self-centered, two people lusting after each other who think love will overcome everything. No sir, the cross overcomes everything. And if people can't embrace that, I don't want to marry them. Go ahead, go down to the Methodist church, you can pay two hundred bucks and use their facility and Reverend Marriage Joe will marry you. You understand what I'm saying. We don't live in a neutral world, and especially in light of the fact that the devil wants to take all of God's children and put them through the ringer. He'll do it if he gets half the chance. Well, anyway, and also the neutral world is not just the devil. You know, part of the problem is, the simplicity of this whole thing: you're too complicated cause you have fears; you have insecurities; you have desires for the way you want to do things. Boy, that's complicated, this thing. It's so simple. God takes care of the birds, and God takes care of the flowers. God's going to take care of you. So what do we do about it?

All right. Now I'm going to share just a couple of things. Okay, just a couple of things that I think are principles that apply through this whole process, and then I'll try to answer a few of these questions, and then you can kill me. The first one is this. Obviously, there's some things to keep in mind, and one is this. You're spiritual progress is a larger issue than marriage right now. The Lord is trying to perfect you; He's trying to establish your heart. And if He delays your marriage for a couple years to make your heart stronger and more established in Him, He's gonna do it. You might think marriage is the most important thing coming up in your life. Wait till you get married. You'll see what an anticlimax it is. I'm amazed at people who live in some kind of fool's paradise all their lives. You remember your friends who said, "Aw, man, I can't wait to get out of high school. Then I'm really going to be free." You say, "What do you mean free?" "I can buy a car. I'm gonna buy a car and I'm gonna work down at Kmart. Aw, man, that's really freedom."

But your parents say, "No, no, you can't be free. You gotta go to college." You say, "Aw, man, I gotta go to college." You go to college and say, "Man, I'm a senior this year," and you can't wait to get out of college cause then you're really free. Then you know, you get this piece of parchment. Now you graduate and you don't have a job, and you say, "Hey, what's the big deal?" You say, "Wait a minute, I know what the big deal is—marriage! You follow me, dear God, that's why I'm incomplete; I need to be married. Please God, right away." Now you get married. It takes about four months to realize, "Hey, this isn't it either." You know, I married a guy with halitosis. What's the big deal? Man, I didn't know this. She snores. What? If I knew this, if I knew I'd been married four months, I couldn't sleep one night since, I wouldn't have married this creep. This isn't the answer. What's the answer?

Now, by this time, we start parting the ways and many times, women say, "Kids! That's the answer.

Oh, I'm going to have a gaggle of kids. Twelve. Fourteen of them." After the second one, and their already giving you drugs to calm you down, you say, "Maybe kids isn't my fulfillment either. Then what is it? It's when the kids grow up and get out of the house! Then we'll really be free. Can't wait for it. Please God. Get them married off. Quick, get them outta here. They're bothering me. They're killing me." And then the kids leave the home, and now the parents are weeping. They say, "Oh, this is terrible. We got nobody in the nest. Our lives are nothing. Our days are over. Wait a minute! When we retire!" And then they get retired and, "Hey, we're retired. I got this gold watch. I'm making twelve hundred dollars a month, and we're walking around like this." And they went through their whole life looking at some kind of a brass ring, some kind of a carrot out in front that's going to make you fulfilled.

You know, let me tell you something: seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and you're gonna be as fulfilled as you'll ever be in your life today. Today. Don't you think something else is gonna make you more fulfilled. You're wrong. I say this because, number one, the most fulfilled person in the world who ever walked the face of this earth is Jesus, and He never got married. Should tell you right off that you don't need marriage to be happy. Now maybe you don't believe that. Maybe you think Jesus was a little bit fruity. But I'll tell you what. Your life may it be, one day, at one millionth of the fulfillment of Jesus' life. He had life and grace and truth flowing in and out. When He loved sinners, He loved with a greater love than you can love your husband or wife. Don't tell me about fulfillment. But what's the key here is seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things get added unto you, including marriage. You know, I hate to lower this thing because marriage is a wonderful thing. But you know what marriage is in the end. It's one of those things added. It's a great part of our lives. Marriage obviously has the purpose of one of these questions, what is the purpose of marriage? Marriage is for your happiness, for your joy, for companionship, to bear children, and raise up children in this world who are children of light. But you know, most of the purpose of marriage are things that you can't see and things nobody talks about. But it's like this: if you love your husband and love your wife in such a way, you've been together for a while, you've been forging into a union, then when the world sees in their busted, distraught lives, somebody's whose marriage is real and free and flowing and loving and gracious, they say, I want this Jesus. There will come a day among Christians very soon when just to see a Christian marriage will bring people to Christ because they will just see love. Now, I can give you big, high, lofty reasons for marriage, you know the bride and Christ and all these things, but I think that's sufficient. Marriage is a wonderful thing. I love my wife. Been married thirty-six years. I love my wife. It's great. I can't prove that to you 'cause she's not here.

### **Living Today and Serving God in "Now Faith"—Seeking First the Kingdom of God**

You know what I'm saying? I mean, some of this is very simple. It just has to do with life. But the

point is this. You know, if you're seeking the kingdom first, you have life. If you're not seeking the kingdom first, you're miserable. Married, unmarried, it makes no difference. And one of the things about the Scripture that's very interesting is this—the Scriptures talk about faith, and faith is always trying to get us to live now. But we always tend to live in the past or the future. Kingdom-living, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, always is now. That's why I like that little phrase, in the English anyway, in Hebrews Chapter 11, where it defines faith. It defines faith by saying: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Now, I like those first two words, "Now faith." Have you got "now faith?" What's "now faith?" It means, I'm living today. Living today. You ever notice how it says, you know, do you feel condemnation sometimes as a Christian? You notice how it says in Romans 8:1, "there is therefore, now, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." But you got to take that by faith "now," or you feel condemned. You watch how many times "now" pops up like this. Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts. See, now we're talking about faith. Now, I'm sorry I didn't use the word "now." What did I use instead? "Today." See, "today" if you hear His voice. His voice comes today by faith. It doesn't come next year. It comes today. But Christians always get off into the future: "Just as soon as I do this, just as soon as that happens, then I can settle down, then I can serve God." Forget it. If you don't serve God today, you're dreaming when you're saying you're gonna serve God tomorrow. What is it that Jesus means when that guy says, "Look, look, I'm gonna follow you, just let me go settle up back home. Let me bury my parents and all this kinda stuff." Jesus says, "Nope, come serve me today, and that's it." See, people always have excuses why they can't serve today. You have an excuse: "Oh, I'm studying too hard. Well, we've got finals, or I just got through with finals. I gotta recuperate." There's always some reason why you can't serve God now. Bull-honkey. Why do you think it's going to be any different if you get married? Well, then I'll be undistracted. Oh, yeah? So you think? Well, let's look at I Corinthians Chapter 7. I know some of you don't like Paul because he stayed single, but he does have a few things to say. Now let's read Paul, and not with bias. But let's just read him as if the guy knew what he was talking about. Can we do that? Just by faith, trust me. Paul knew a little bit more about this than you realize. I'll never forget the time we asked Stephen Kaung one time to speak about family, raising children. And he said, "Well, Mary and I did not have the fortune of having children so I don't feel qualified to speak on this." However, he shared the best message on family life I ever heard, as one disqualified. Paul never married so he's disqualified from talking about marriage. But he has a few things. Maybe we should listen. Okay, here we go, I just want to think about this. Here we go, Chapter 7, I Corinthians, verses 7 through 9: "For I wish that all men were even as I myself, that is, single. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this matter, and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows, it's good for them marry than to burn with passion." That's very practical, isn't it? You see, oh, it's better not to marry.

Brothers and sisters, I want to tell you something. I don't care what culture says, what civilization says, or anybody. It's better not to marry. It's better not to marry. That's the Word of God. I know you're saying, "Oh, wait a minute. Something's bad, wrong here." Well, let's look at some more verses. Because we got to see why he says that, that's all. Verse 26—a little hint at why it's better not to marry. "I suppose, therefore, that this is good because of the present distress that it's good for a man to remain as he is." There's a present distress going on. All right, you still don't believe me. Okay, verse 32—this is why Paul says it's better not to be married. Now he's not telling anybody not to marry. He says that if you can't stay apart, get married. But he says, "Let me tell you something." Verse 32—"But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how we may please the Lord. But he who is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. There's a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord. She may be holy in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit. Not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction." That's the reason he says it's better not to marry; so that you can serve the Lord without distraction. Seek first the kingdom of God; serve the Lord without distraction. What a wonderful life; that is the full life to serve the Lord without distraction.

And he said, "I'm telling you." You see, this right here, Chapter 7:32-35, ought to be the warning label on every marriage. I think I'm going to have some marriage certificates printed up where I put the name, you know, John Doe marries Sara Lee on such and such date, and have this warning label in red with the skull and crossbones. If you get married, you will be tempted to distraction. Seek first the kingdom of God even though you're married. Now, I'm sorry if I'm strong about this. But I have seen too many Christian couples get married and leave the purpose of God to make money, have a family, get a better house. I've seen people who God had put in an assembly to work and serve, and I've seen them leave and move somewhere isolated without any assembly, any church, so they could make more money. Wrong. And there's too many, even Chinese couples I know, who are useless to God. They're Christians. But the man is bent on making a fortune, or he's a workaholic just for the sake of workaholicism. And he's missed the mark, and he's not seeking first the kingdom of God. And all his life will come to nothing. He'll have holes in his pockets and great regret at the end of his life. So I'm telling you: if you get married, you serve God first. Don't let that home-building, all those stupid, foolish things, "as soon as we get a house, then we'll serve the Lord. As soon as I get a better job, then I'll serve the Lord." Forget about it. If you're making \$210 a week, you put twenty-one bucks in the offering now and serve God. You understand what I'm saying? I hate that when I see people out of the purpose of God because of their own selfish lifestyle— "for the sake of my kids I can't serve God." Bologna.

Let's talk about reality just a minute. Reality is, we gotta go through a lot of stuff in life. Marriage is

stuff. But throw all of this stuff with the hope of the Lord first, or we miss the point of all this stuff. So when you go through the gospel of John, you see a lot of stuff. You see the marriage at the beginning in chapter two. Or you see Jesus turning the bread and feeding the multitude and all this. Then the people came running up to Jesus to get more bread, and Jesus said, “You’re missing the point. The point is not to get more stuff. The point is to see through the stuff. I’m the bread.” But men start making \$80,000 a year, and they look at the stuff, and stop looking at the Lord who gives them the stuff. And they’re idol worshippers in the Christian church. Idol worshippers! because they’re trusting their money, and they no longer ask for their daily bread because they know they can make it. It’s totally out of the purpose of God. I’m so mad about it, I could spit. Because you can tell. I’ve seen too many young people who had the heart to serve the Lord 99%, get married, and they’re down to fifty now. Just lukewarm. They go to the meetings. They don’t participate. Who do you think the Lord wants to spit out of His mouth? The Christians who aren’t seeking the kingdom of God first. And you know why? They’re distracted in their marriage. So you want to get married? Okay, now I’m telling you, there’s going to be a lot of stuff in your marriage, and you gotta push right through the whole thing and seek the Lord first. If you do, you’ll serve God and be fruitful, have an abundant life, and be able to serve God and minister. And if God wants to move you back to China, He will, but you’re going anywhere He wants you to go. And you’re not out to make money, and you’re not out to make a nest for yourself. And you’re not out to be isolated, or you’re not out to make your family proud. You’re out to serve God and Him only. And all these other things will be added unto you. You get off that track, and you can tell me all you want about how much you love Jesus. I’m not buying it. That’s the warning label I want to put on marriage.

### **Remain Pure Before the Lord and He Will Fulfill You**

If you’re a young person, and you say, “Man, I’m serving God. But I tell you, I’m so distracted by my desires and lusts, and I feel alone, and I want to be married. I’m so distracted by it, I don’t think I can serve God.” Push through it and serve God. Do it now, because later on, it’s harder than it is now. You say, “Oh no, the hardest thing to deal with is my own temptations, my own sexual drives, and all.” It is not the hardest thing you will deal with in your life. You wait and see after you get married; it’s much harder. Things you must push through to serve God. That’s like the devil’s first temptations. He hits you on the physical level, see if you can handle it. Oh, you wait till he hits the deeper ones. Devil will tell you you can turn the stones into bread if you’ll just acknowledge him. I tell you, it gets worse later on. So all I can say is, “Push through those temptations.” I know you say it’s the hardest stuff. But you see what he said here: If you’re single, then your care is about how to stay holy. That takes a lot of exercise, doesn’t it, how to stay holy. But the Lord loves that. The Lord says, “Hey, they’re having a tough time. They’re thinking about things, but then they push it away.

They read the Bible.” And maybe we’ll mention something about that in just a minute, some positive things about that. But you know what? It’s very pleasing to the Lord. Like I Thessalonians 4:3 says, “If you keep your vessel holy, abstain from sexual immorality.” I want you to know something. The Lord loves His virgin children. He loves them; He takes special care of them. And there’s not many of them around anymore. In the United States, Christian kids are just messed up all over the place. Don’t you think they’re not going to pay a price. Listen, I counsel people all the time. You know, I’m not a counselor. People come to me all the time. And they come to me with hangups and things that result from the sins of their early life, and now that they’re married, their marriage and their own sex life and intimate things are not complete and satisfying because of the things that they did before they were married. So don’t you tell me that there’s no consequence to that stuff. Don’t you tell me; I don’t believe it. I deal with too many neurotic Christians. Don’t let anybody give you that stuff, “You’re just an animal, go out there when you’re in heat and do it.” Bologna. But God loves His virgin children, and He never forgets you. He never forgets you. See this is the devil’s great lie— He’s forgotten you. Unfortunately, you’re with a whole mass of Chinese, and He just overlooked you because you all look alike. So He’s forgotten all about you, see? And there you are just staying for the Lord, keeping yourself, and all this time, He’s just forgotten you, overlooked you, because the squeaky wheel gets the oil. There’s some Christians squeaking, so He goes over there and helps them. Yeah, you remain chaste, and you remain pure before the Lord, and you’re going to get the best part. You’re going to get the best part. If you have to wait till you’re thirty years old, oh, how you’re going to struggle over those thirty years, but when you get married, you’re going to have the best part.

But don’t think that marriage is going to fulfill you. That’s bologna. Don’t think what you need is a spouse, then you’ll be happy. That’s bologna. If you’re a sister, you can have as precious a fellowship with sisters of the same sex in Christ, having fellowship and prayer together as you can with a husband. And then it’s the same way. And men it’s the same way. And you can have some fellowship across the way, too. You know, boy and girl, as one of the questions seems to imply. You can. You can have great fellowship.

You know, you get married. Now you want to have fellowship with this guy. Now you come home from church and everything, and here he comes home, “Nahhh, I got football games on. Come on.” And you say, “Hey, honey, let’s talk.” And he responds, “Well, not right now. What do you want?” This is the guy you got married to have fellowship with. He’s going to meet all the desires you want. “Hey, honey, where’s the food? Let’s go, go, go.” That’s who you married. You know, this whole thing, “somebody’s going to fulfill you,” there’s only one answer to that that’s right: “Jesus fulfills you.” And so many times, even in marriage, you’re brought to the place where it’s you and Jesus, and Jesus says, “Am I enough?” You say, “I can’t live with this guy another day. He’s driving me nuts.” And Jesus says, “Am I enough?” You say, “Yeah.” He says, “Then you can live with this

guy.” You don’t believe me yet. But the taste of reality will hit you sooner or later.

Okay, anyway, now let’s talk about some practical things, perhaps regarding “now faith.” Now faith. What does this mean, “Now faith.” Well, let’s turn to Psalm 37. I’m just picking out verses everyone knows and loves but don’t quite believe. Look at a couple of things. Then fortunately, I won’t have time to answer questions. Now, let’s see. Psalm 37, let’s just read verses 3 through 5: “Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land, feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord. He’ll give you the desires of your heart.” Not a woman in this meeting doesn’t claim this verse. “Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”

### **Affirm the Will of God in Faith**

Now-faith is very simple. Now-faith understands something. Number 1: Right now, what is the will of God for me? Should I be married? Should I be single? Answer: the will of God for me is that I be married because I am. And the will of God for you is you should be single. Now, listen. I want you to understand something. If you know that the will of God for you today (today, what’s the most important day of your life?). Today. If the will of God for you today is to be single, then you say “Thank you, Lord, I’m in Your will.” What does that mean? It means you have grace, you have fullness and fulfillment. In the will of God is where all these things are added to us. The will of God is where we have joy and fullness. You remember when Jesus came, and the disciples, you know, and He was talking to the woman at the well, and they went away to McDonald’s, and they came back with a bag of groceries. And there He was, He looked like He’d eaten a meal. They said, “Jesus, did you eat already?” He says, “My meat is to do the will of God.” Want to know what makes you happy? If you live single for God today. Today. Today, you’re single.

You say, “But, but, no, no, no, no, I meant what is my long range will?” He says, “Heh, heh, I’ll tell you that when you get there.” Today, if you hear His voice, you’re happy. Live that way. Don’t live under the gray cloud, “Aw, man, I tell you, my biological clock is ticking. I’m twenty-two years old and not married yet. Ohhh. Biological clock. I’m just going to be an old, shriveled-up lemon.” The devil got you off on that track. And because you’re off on that track, you’re not serving God today. You got a issue with God. You got a reason to be mad at Him. You got a reason you’re frustrated with God. That’s the devil. He put you there. Rather than, say, “Praise God, I get up today, and here’s the next day of my life. Jesus, you’re with me, and I’m gonna seek Your will and serve You today, and that’s the fullness.”

Many people tell me, all the people, even some of your parents, tell me that their happiest days were when they were at the University involved in the Christian organization, and studying the Bible and going out and witnessing, and they weren’t even married. That was the happiest days of their life! Course, they’re still trying to get over raising you. Only kidding. Of course, you make them even happier. Everyday they see you, you’re such a delight. You come up to your parents and say, “Oh, I

love you so much. In the will of God, you're my parents. Otherwise, I'd be outta here."

But you know, here's the kicker. Right now, it's in the morning, you get up, you say, "I am single today." You should say, "Praise God I am single today! That's where I need to be. That's what's best for me because I trust Him. I don't fret myself. I trust in the Lord. I do good, and I delight myself in the Lord, and I know He'll give me the desires of my heart. I know that's so today. I'm living by faith. That's what faith means. If I do today right and the will of God, tomorrow, I'm going to meet the guy." See, that's the way it works. If you stop doing the will of God for the next couple of years because you're searching, you're in the search mode. When my computer gets in the search mode, sometimes it gets stuck there. You know what I'm saying. Now I can't do any more word processing because I got this little watch that's going round and round and round. I don't know where it's searching; it must be in some hard drive I don't even have hooked up. And what are you doing? Gotta crash the thing down, start it up all over again. That's what the Lord has to do with some of you guys. Just pull the plug. You're going crazy in the search. Meanwhile, you're not doing the word of God today. How you going to get to who you're supposed to marry? It's in the will of God you're going to find the one you're supposed to marry because they're Christian, too. Now, if any of you have any question of about marrying non-Christian, I'll stop it right now. Don't. Don't. But God has a Christian for you if you're supposed to get married. Most of you are. Few of you maybe not. But if you don't do the will of God today, you're not going to find it because today may be your day. That's why you're handing out tracts down at the supermarket that you'll bump into this guy. And he's got a guitar in his car, and he starts singing Christian songs. The rest is history. But if you're sitting at home and watching cartoons, there he is with the car. He goes into Safeway, and he's dissatisfied too, so he buys twenty-five Twinkies and eats them. We missed. Now because the Lord loves us, He brings us around another second chance. See, he needs more Twinkies. He comes back to Safeway, and you're there. The Lord knows what He's doing, I'm telling you. But if you can't live today, are you going to tell me you can't live today successfully, but when you get married you can live successfully? Ha, ha, ha. You're so full of bologna. See, you're in a dream world. Ladies and gentlemen, you're in a dream world. You do it today. You be faithful to Him today; for now, you see. And here's the real thing the Lord loves: when you affirm God's will. Are you one of those people who take it passively? Okay, the will of God, is for me to be single today even though this is the worst plan for me. You honestly don't know what I need. You have no concern for my raging emotions. Still, okay, God, kill me, I'm Yours. I love the person who says, "This is the will of God. This is the best for me. This is the best for me." What is the end of the Lord in James 5:11? What is the end of the Lord? The Lord is compassionate, full of tender mercies. He knows just what you need, He knows what's best for you. And today it's best you be single. Why don't you affirm that? This is the best time of my life. I'm going to college. I'm learning all this stuff.

Let's go on and talk about that some more. So first one is affirm the will of God for you today. In

faith, today and now, I know where I'm at. This is where God wants me. I'm guaranteeing you, if you're in the will of God, you will find your mate. But that's an attitude of faith today. You got to live today to find your mate. You live for tomorrow, it doesn't happen.

### **Discipline of Contentment**

Okay, number two: there's a discipline of contentment. Now Philippians 4, we all know that passage, but just Philippians 4, Paul says something very wonderful. Having understood that God willed me to be single today, verse eleven of four, he says: "Not that I speak in regard to need for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased. I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all I things I've learned, both to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Now that's the discipline of content. Now, you think Paul enjoyed being in jail. But he learned how to be content. He went through some times in ministry where he barely had enough food to eat because you know, he was in a situation where there wasn't a supply coming from the saints, or you know, you're just setting up a tent business and haven't sold any yet. It takes a while to build a tent before you can sell it. He barely made ends meet. And there are other times he abounded, you know. He went and visited the Chinese. And they went out to eat for lunch and supper. But you know what he learned? In all situations to be content because he knew something that we have to learn. There are times where we'll feel need, and there are times where we'll feel bloated. And in all this we should be content because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Well, what is he saying there? He's saying there's times I sense a need, a lack and everything, but I've learned to be content. I'm here in jail, boy, I feel such a burden to be preaching, but here I am, stuck in jail. But you know what, this is God's will for me. Lord, I take it. I take it. I'm content. I have learned to be content. Notice he had to learn to be content. Don't you think he started out grumbling? Of course. But he learned how to be content. It's a discipline. And everyone of you, you know, I'll tell you. You know, the Lord loves us so much; the Lord will bless you most of your life, but you may go through some times in your life where things are pretty slim. Can you learn how to be content in there because Christ is the one who strengthens you? This is a discipline that you can do in your life because there is always grace for you in the will of God. There's always the grace you need to get through whatever you're going through. So that's number two.

### **Basic Trust**

Number three. Basically, we have to talk about just once again that matter of basic trust. Notice where it said back there in Psalm 37. There are several points there which actually might be good to look at. Psalm 37, verse 23. You notice verse one of Psalm 37, it says, "Do not fret because of evildoers." I mean, that's where He's starting now. He's got fretful people. And He says the antidote

to it, you might say, in verse 3 is “Trust in the Lord. Trust in the Lord.” That’s what establishes your heart. Trust in the Lord. I’m immovable, Lord. This is Your will for me. I trust in You. You’ll lead me to the person. That’s it. I can’t add one inch to my height by worrying. Trust. That is your daily decision whether you’re married or you’re old or you’re young. Either you trust, or what’s the opposite of trust? You worry. That’s it. You trust or you worry. Trust or worry. Those are the opposites here.

It starts out, “Fret not yourself. Trust.” As soon as you don’t trust, you fret. Got a couple of parents here. If you’re fretting, you’re not in the will of God. No sir. I’m sorry. There is no place. Paul says, “Pray about everything. Take your anxieties to the Lord. Pray about them. Then walk away with thanksgiving.” You’re holding on to fret if you’re worrying about stuff. Wrong. Sorry. Someone mad about to lose their jobs. Don’t fret it. Is this a discipline? Well, do we really trust the Lord, or we think we better do something quick? See, here we are, touching that fourth dimension again. Do we trust the Lord that He’s arranging things? Do you trust Him? It’s a fourth dimensional thing. It cannot be seen. And another thing, you know this. Love. God is love. And love overcomes all barriers. Now the depth of the love that Paul invites us to look at together is really marvelous. Because you know what, what do we have? Length. What is our length? Let’s make that our knowledge and methodology. And what is our width? Our passions. This is very small. And what is our height? Our families, our church, our covering. And you know what the depth of the love can do? It can jump over any height. If God brings two people together, and they love each other, nothing can stand in the way of the will of God. That love may have to be longsuffering. That love may have to be patient and kind. Sometimes your parents are wrong. And God’s right. You know something? God will whoop-whoop on your parents. He will because depth is greater than height. Now do you trust that? Sometimes social customs, all that, it’s a great height. Love leaps over the wall. Love overcomes. You have to be loving even when you hit the wall. And it’s interesting in everybody’s life, the Lord lets you hit the wall. Now, I have found Miss Right. I was looking under every rock. I was away at college. I found Miss Right. She and I should get married, and then I hit the wall. My parents say, “No.” Now, when I find Miss Right, because of course I’m a Christian and I’m very spiritual, am I right? Is that Miss Right? Or have you found Mr. Right? Is he Mr. Right? What is the percentage of Christians knowing Mr. Right? Historically, accurately, I would predict 60 to 40, they’re wrong. That is to say many of your parents who are Christians now, who got married, thought sometime before they got married, they’d met Mr. Right. And he didn’t turn out to be Mr. Right. They later married Mr. Right. And then 40% of them found somebody, only one person as it were, found out that’s Mr. Right, and they married Mr. Right. The chances of you actually discovering Mr. Right your first time through, 60/40 you’ll be wrong. I hate to tell you that because of course, you’re so knowledgeable and so wise. You would never make a mistake. See, because your length and width are really big. But that’s why the height is there; it tests the length and the

width. Here, this is right. Oh, no, it isn't. Oh, let's see if love can not leap over the wall. Well, well, well, see, if we don't marry right now, then he might find himself interested in somebody else. Well, then it wasn't the will of God. Now if love can't endure as it says in I Corinthians 13, if love has got to be consummated within six months or it goes stale, that's not the abiding love which is from heaven anyway. So God sets up a little height. I mean, this is a principle, you know this is true. This is a height. This is a principle regarding the will of God. Many times God says, "This is My will." And you go to do the will, and you hit height. You hit family members. That's not the will of God. You remember when David says, "The Lord has spoken to me. I've got to go. I'll fight that Goliath." And what did he hit? The first thing he hit when he says, "I gotta go fight Goliath. The Lord told me." What's the first height he hit? Remember the story. I Samuel. His brothers: "What are you doing, you jerk? You're just a little whipper-snapper; you can't beat Goliath. Go back home. I know what you're up to. You're up to some kind of nasty stuff. It's just you and your little conniving ways again." David said, "What did I do?" You hit the height, buddy, and it's testing your faith. And then he went into King Saul's, and says, "You know, the Lord's spoken to me. I'm going to go out to Goliath." King Saul says, "You can't go, you're just a kid." He said, "Wait a minute. I fought a lion. I fought a bear." He says, "Okay, but here, wear my armor." He says, "I can't wear this stuff. Saul, it's huge." He's six-foot-five, big, hairy guy, and David's just a little guy. He says, "I can't wear that stuff." He hit the wall again. Listen, you do the will of God. You hit it. And it tests your faith. So you think you found Mr. Right? Okay, well, watch what happens when you hit the wall. Love will overcome. Do you trust? See, we're talking about trust and depth here. We're outta our depth. We rather have our hands on the mechanical device. Makes his remote control run, which is a partial answer of the question how come women run the shop so much. They grab the remote control from the marriage, and they're still holding on to it. But anyway, why get into that and really kill myself. Then the women will kill me.

### **Dwell in the Land**

But the last point I'm going to make, verse three of Psalm 37: "Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness." I just want to suggest those three things to go along with trusting in the Lord. Trusting in the Lord. Let's first of all talk about "dwell in the land." Here's what a single person should do. A single person, and I tell you, this is the will of God. You can fight all you want over this. But a single person should go to every Christian meeting they possibly can go to. Prayer meeting. Single person should go there because you're undistractedly devoted to the Lord. You got time to read the Word. "I don't have time to read the Word because I'm going to college. I'm studying, and I got to cram for this. I got to do that." You have more time to read the Word of God than your parents do. Go do it. Go to every meeting. Dwell in the land. Okay, I want to serve God. Then get into the church life and live in the church life and serve in the church life and fix the

chairs or do whatever you're called on to do. You be there. You be there. You be there. And that's the way you'll find the will of God for your life. Be there. Young people, when they graduate from high school, and suddenly they go missing for four years. Not the will of God. Sorry. Even when you're away at school, there's some way you can dwell in the land, meaning dwell in the church, dwell in your height. Stay under the covering. Answer to the women. Should I go out to the place where this boyfriend is? We're thinking of getting married. It's not official yet. And now he's moved out to Arizona. Should I move out to Arizona and find a job in the same area? My answer is no. Your covering's not out there. Is that difficult? What's your covering? As a child, your covering is your parents, your church, those that you know. Now you're going to go out somewhere, places you don't know, people you don't know. You're just going to land over there, and you're going to be protected? Okay, how, I want to know. Well, you say, the Lord protects me. Well, sure, okay, but I want something a little more than that. See, I know that bothers you. It's just too simple. But you want height, or you want to be shorty? That's not to say you're not supposed to marry a person. But it's to say that you need to remain covered. You don't think the Lord can reveal His will to you regarding somebody while you're two hundred miles away? I find that fantastic to believe. Well, okay.

### **Do Good**

Well, first of all, dwell in the land. Second of all, do good. Get together and fellowship with people. Do good works. Witness, serve, work on the campus. Do those kind of things. Young people should be involved in witnessing the gospel, I think, an awful lot. And most of the time they blow it. They don't do it. But being a young person is a time where young people are most likely to find Christ. People are more likely to find Christ as students than they later on when they're forty years old. They get hard-hearted. You get the perfect opportunity and the perfect situation and do good, it says. Do good. Serve the Lord. If you have compassion on certain things that need help, help the poor. Do these kind of things. I'm telling you, it's a wonderful thing. I have no hesitation about that for young people.

### **Feed on His Faithfulness**

And feed on His faithfulness. See, single persons think they're so poor, and they don't have time. And single people have the richest time to find the will of God for your life, and what your gifts are, and what you can do. Feed on His faithfulness. Now is the time to study the Word. If you're only taking 16 hours a semester of college, you ought to take a correspondence course on the Bible, learning the book of something. Gospel of Mark. Take a correspondence course with Moody Bible School. We should be studying. Study. Not just kinda listen to the preacher on Sundays. Study it. Now's the time. Feed on His faithfulness. It really means in the Hebrew, "Eat the Amen." Eat Amen.

Feed on His Faithfulness. Study the Word. Study to show yourself approved. Now's the time to do this as a young person. Now's the time to study.

Young people have a great opportunity. Because you're single, you can go places. You should take more trips. I mean Christian trips. I don't mean skiing up in Colorado. I'm talking about going to conferences. Some of you guys maybe need to go to the conference in Taiwan. See what it's like over there. Pool up some of your money. Now I'm talking to maybe the kids out of college. If you don't want to spend your parent's money, and say, "Hey, I just got tickets. I'm going to a conference in Germany I heard about." You know, I don't want to be foolish. But really, you should meet with other Christians in other places. Meet with other singles in other places, and go on retreats, and go to conferences and do things like that. You should. It's the best time to do it because once you get married, believe me, you'll have encumbrances that prevent you from doing a lot of those things that you wish you could do. So being young and being single is the perfect time to do these kind of things. All right, well, that's enough. I think you get the basic idea.

### **Finding God's Will as Men and Women, Husband and Wife**

Why can't I answer these questions? Because there's something much deeper going on than just these questions. All right. So having said that, how come in Christian marriages the woman seems stronger than the man? Well, number one, Adam and Eve were both just as strong as each other. You know, the Bible never says the woman is weak, the man is strong. Lance says the theory, being Jewish, his Jewish theory that a woman is actually stronger than a man. And that's why the Lord tells the woman to submit. Otherwise, she'll overwhelm the guy. That's quite an interesting theory. I'm going to put it on an even basis. I think a woman is just as strong as a man. Now, what happens. Well, let's talk spiritually for just a minute. What happens is, in the world today, in the present spiritual forces of this world, right now, two things are happening at the same time, and we happen to be in this down time where men are being emasculated, and women are taking their place. That is, women are rising up in insubordination and rebellion. So we have a whole situation now where women are rising up in rebellion, and they're being insubordinate, and where men have lost their position. They've forgotten what they're doing now, and they've kinda lost their ground. They know they've been male-chauvinist, and now they're all sensitized to, "Well, gee, I don't know, maybe...." Meanwhile, the women are stomping forward, and they're seizing the day, you know, and all this kind of stuff, and that even slides into the church. But now the responsibility in the end is why are the men such wimps and the women so strong? Basically this. The men have abdicated their spiritual responsibility. What's abdicate mean? A man's supposed to be on a throne, head of his house. Abdicate is the word they use when the king leaves his throne. Men have abdicated their responsibility. They're the ones who are first responsible. And women are insubordinate, and that's why you have this. Sometimes women feel that they have to be insubordinate to get anything done

because the husband refuses to do anything of practical value. But the woman should let the house collapse till the man realizes what he's done. But it is the man's fault. Man abdicates the responsibility. But you see, we're not in an ideal world so a woman comes into the marriage, she's already seeing red with women's lib whether she admits it or not. And the man is already worried about "I've been too chauvinistic, and I should be more sensitive." The next thing you know, the man's wearing an apron, and the woman's calling the shots. And there's all the role confusion, and all that stuff.

Don't you think the enemy's in this thing in a real way? Boy, what he's done in families today is unbelievable. It's hard to even express what he's done. He's made women men, and made men women. It's his doing. And so that's why many times, a man finds it's easier to live with a man, so they say, "I'm gay." They're not gay; they just can't handle a relationship of a man/woman because you need the grace of Christ to do it. This is how man learns to become strong; he learns how to overcome his wife. Now when a woman first marries a man, the woman's always submissive, the man's always in control. And that's about seven years. Then the woman says, "Get out of the way, honey. You don't know what you're doing. I got to raise the kids. You're a nerd, here I go." That's what happens most of the time. They never say a word like that. That's just what happens. You see, the man has blown it for seven years. In a way, he's the fault of his chance. Woman says, "The kids are going crazy, and you're doing nothing. I'm taking over. Get out of the way." The guy says, "But, but, but, honey. Okay, I'll do the important things. I'll make sure there's gas in the car. You take care of everything else." So the woman takes over. But part of that is the world leaking in. All that insubordination stuff. All that women-ruling kind of thing. But you know, the man and the woman are meant to co-rule together. You go right back to Genesis. It isn't the woman who cowers in corner, does nothing, and the man does everything. In Genesis, it's a co-ruling, and a sort of equality in the thing. But in the end, the buck stops at the man. But today, it's a lot of whack. You hardly know where to begin. So it's really a pity that people find this to be the case. There's some churches, of course, where the men rule and the women submit. There are some places like that. And those places are just as wrong because the men have a chip on their shoulders. They're all little guys who want to act big. They make the women shut up and not say anything, and they tell them, "Shut up, we do all the praying, and we do all the talking. You do nothing. That's spiritual." No, it's not. That's bondage. But there's some people who do that, and they think somehow they're spiritual by doing that. Either extreme is wrong. The balance is in the middle. A husband and wife should go in a room and have a good fight over it: "I think you're disciplining the children, or I think you're too hard with the children. Oh, what should we do, what should we do?" And finally they get down on their knees, and pray about it, and they come out of their room as a total unit. The husband supports the wife. The wife supports the husband. That's the way it should be. They should fight about it, then decide what the will of God is and do it cause there's an equality. There's not too many women who

are wimps. Women are strong. But men, they can be strong, too. I'm not going to say more about that. There's too much trouble there.

You know, we've got all these scattered questions. But let me ask you. You have any question you'd like to say? Any response? 'Cause our time's up. I've blabbed on too long, I think. So how about it? Someone have a question or a comment, or maybe some angle you heard one of these questions you'd like to something explained a little bit?

### **Brothers and Sisters Comments and Questions**

Brother: If Christian parents disagree with marriage, does that mean it shouldn't be?

Dana: Now we're talking about Christian parents, if Christian parents disagree. The problem sometimes with parents is they're unwilling to sit down and reason together. They have prejudice involved that makes them unreasonable. But that's reality, too. But I believe if you truly submit, even saying, "You know, I believe you're wrong about this, but I will never go against your will." I believe the Lord would haunt them day and night, till they saw that it was their prejudice that was the problem. But here again, it's a matter of trust. I don't see a child who truly respects his parents could go against their will. Somehow the Lord has to change the parents' heart. Sometimes it's difficult and sometimes it takes time. But you know, in that taking of time, you hold to a relationship that becomes very precious. You hold to your parents, and eventually, you win the one you love, and love conquers love. But just to bypass parents causes nine times out of ten a great mistake. So I appreciate the question asked in respect of parents because you see, they are there for your protection, and sometimes we make bad judgments. We really do. And so that's why we hate our parents when they cut us off at the pass. It turns out they were right. So if you'll agree with me about this: that you think you found the right person and you could sixty percent of the time be wrong. Now do you agree with me that you're not infallible? Some of you don't agree with me that you're infallible. If you agree with me you're not infallible, and I'm saying sixty-forty. I'm saying sixty percent of the time you're wrong, but let's make it even fifty-fifty. So how else are you going to know except by having some height to you, the confirmation of the whole situation? How else are you going to know? If all you've got is length and width of two people whose width is getting wider and wider because their passions are going stronger and stronger, now how are they going to make a reasonable decision? They need some height. That's why God gave you height, God-given gift.

You want to make it simple? Listen, here's what we can do. You don't have to worry about it anymore. Let's leave it with Shirley Woods. When she comes, say "I want to get married, anybody's fine." Let her pick somebody out. Of course, she would never do this, you know. But let her pick somebody out and marry him. And you know something, you'll be happy.

I'm telling you. But that's not how God works. It's not just a happen-chance thing. But I can guarantee one other thing. When you marry whoever you're going to marry, and most of you will marry. When you marry that whoever you're going to marry, you're going to find out you're going to have to live with the wrong person. What a wonderful life. It is. It's a wonderful life. Because as you learn to live with the wrong person, you also learn how to live in the body of Christ. I'm in the body of Christ. I wouldn't choose any of those people that I fellowship with on a natural basis. The Lord says, "Hah, this is my great joke. That's why I put you all together. All the neuros. I got them all the neurotics." Here we are, piled together. All these problems and conflicts. He says, "They're one. I love them all. Learn to live with the wrong person." It's the same story with marriage. That's why he won't give you a perfect mate. He won't do it. Even if it's George in the Jungle. He's not going to be the right person.

Okay, another question:

Brother: What thought processes are involved for you to say that I'm drawn to this person? There has to be something there, you know, where you make a decision that you want to be with her.

Dana: Well, here again, this is a fourth-dimension answer-question. Well, I mean, how do you know the situation's right? Well, how do you know when the will of God is right? In the end, you say, "Well, I just knew it." Well, now, how do you come to that point? Is there a certain level of, you know, you have a feelingometer in your heart, and it's (signaling sound). Now it's not up in the red zone yet. I think I'm kinda interested, but I'm really sorta, kinda interested, but I don't know, it's sorta in the kinda interested zone. One day the feelingometer goes into the red zone, and that's it!

No, because you know, I wish there were answers like that. How do you know? You see, I think this is our situation. And I think the Lord wants us to gather together. This is the proposition: now, Lord, there. Just take my hands off as best I can. I got strong feelings. If you don't want me, somehow weaken the feelings. Somehow bring in the circumstances, somehow make the guy look at somebody else and get interested and go away, and something circumstantially, I mean, there is something that happens, but it's something circumstantially that kinda puts the last puzzle in the jigsaw. It's a circumstantial thing that happens. There's always something. It's either some kind of Scripture you received, or usually it's a convergence of several circumstances. And then you just know. You just know. You felt your aloneness, and this happened and that happened, and then you know. But it's a fourth dimensional, deep thing that has to do with God bringing two people together, and then God, in His own time, goes like this—turns on that magnetic switch. That's it. How do I know God turned on the switch? I got strong feelings toward her. But these are bogus. You could tell those sounds are going no good. This is why we can't trust our emotions. We can't really trust our emotions. But you know what? If you're going to marry somebody, you're going to have

emotions, too. You know, God's not going to say, "You see that ugly wretch over on the other side. You see that sister. He's six years younger than you. You see him picking his nose. That's the one for you." You say "That cannot be. Never Lord, never." Now, never say never.

So how can you answer a fourth-dimension question? Ask your parents, "Well, how did you know?" Now sometimes, you see, parents have learned to lie a lot. Even like the guys who teach the Bible like me. See, I know when I get all these questions, the goal is not to answer any of the questions, but to spend two hours just chirping away. This is, you know, really, you know, I learned this from Brother Wu. You just spend a long time speaking, but you don't answer the questions. But, you see, this leaves you for the next time when you bring in Shirley Woods. But, you see, what I'm saying, your parents are lying, I don't really mean that. But what I'm saying is your parents somehow idealize the thing cause they've been married twenty years now. Well, how did you definitely know? Well, I just had this sort of thing. It was sort of like Flubber. It settled on me, you see. But you know what, when your parents got married, they sorta wondered, too. They kinda wondered, "Gee, I don't know. Is this right? Is this not right?" You know, even people who "really love," some people go blind gah-gah love, and I don't know what to say about those people. They're just basket cases all the way through life, and sometimes they really love each other all the way through life. A lot of times, people who marry, this is the honest truth. Now, can you stand honest truth? A lot of people who get married, one person loves the other more than the other person loves the other one. And you know what, it works out. Because the person who wasn't so lovely turns out to be more lovely than they thought. And the one who thought they were a hot-shot turns out to be not so hot. Don't think it's two blind lovers coming together by a magnet.

And there's some people, may I say this as well, you see, this is what I'm saying, there's a whole fourth-dimension thing. There's some people who are very, really unemotional. And they're not going to get real emotional about anybody. But these persons as well, by the grace of God, can learn to truly love somebody. Not everyone's an emotional hot-cake. But a person who isn't particularly emotional can love just as truly as someone who's an emotional hot-cake. Because love has dimensions to it that are hidden deep. And you'll find when you get married that love is more than just a passion in your bed. Love has a lot of daily things involved. It makes you really love. And sometimes that person who's not that emotional turns out to be the best lover. And the person who is all emotional turns out to be a little flaky. You see, this is the whole problem. Our definition of love comes from the world. That's why we need to chuck it out half the time. 'Cause you find somebody, you feel you have some compatibility, and you find, gee, I really enjoy being with this person, but your feelings aren't you know, this overwhelming, you know that doesn't mean you shouldn't get married. Just

think of my poor brother Isaac there. He's shipping off to India now. And you know what he's thinking. I mean, he's got just as much faith as you have. You know he's on this plane, right now, taking off from Kennedy Airport, he says, "Aw, man, God help me. Is this the right thing to do? I don't know, man. I don't know her from Adam's house cat. What if she..." I mean, he hardly knows anything. You know what, listen to this, you're not going to believe this, she hardly speaks any English. He doesn't speak any Telugu. Boy, are they going to be built together. And you know something? The Lord will make it work. That's why I got confidence. You may not be the best chooser when you choose somebody, or you might feel so insecure that the big, tall dumb guy goes "duh" comes along and you marry him. But you know what? The Lord will make it work out. If you learn how to live with the wrong person by the grace of God, you'll be happy. You'll be happy. And you know why God wants you married anyway? He's got a lot of other purposes involved in you getting married, then you just getting married and being happy. But you know what one of His purposes is? He wants you to be happy. I'm happy. And He wants you to be happy. He's not such a booger as you think. He's full of compassion, tender mercies. He knows all about you.

*Lord, we just come to You and worship You. Here You are so busy at working the fourth-dimension, and here we are so complicated that we're trying to figure out a fifth-dimension. Lord, all of these questions laying in a pile unanswered here on this desk just shows how poor I am at explaining things. But Lord, I would just pray somehow you help Your children to live today in great joy because they know the will of God for them today, and tomorrow will take care of itself. And if they can remember that if You can remember the sparrow, You'll certainly remember them. And if they can keep themselves pure, You'll lead them to the right person. And even if that person doesn't know that they're the right person, Lord, knock them on the head. Show them what a fool they are. And if we find these situations where we hit against the height of culture, of family, of the church, Lord, we thank You for the preservation and the covering that You've given us because it makes us all the taller. And Lord, everyone here who's got a family who's involved even at a point of meddling. How wonderful that is. It makes them that much taller. It gives them that much more character. We thank you Lord for the things that You've given us, the things that we have. Now Lord, we want to learn to come to delight ourselves in the Lord, to trust in You, to do good, to dwell in the land, to feed on Your faithfulness. Help us be about the now of today, and then when tomorrow comes, we'll enjoy it all the more. Help us to seek first the kingdom of God, all these other things, Lord, I cannot answer. I know that there's many searching hearts who truly desire a mate and who sense their aloneness and all of these things. But I know in the patience with which they wait, You will perfect and establish their hearts. And so I thank You even for that. And for all these precious young people, I'm thankful especially for those willing to write the questions and ask the questions. Oh, Lord, so many things going on in our breast. And how You love us and know them all. Oh Lord, You would never rebuke*

*those who are open and ask questions. But You just satisfy us with Your presence when You decide not to give us the answer. Lord, we wait for You, and we do confess our love for You. And we trust in the fourth-dimension. Oh the depth of the love of Jesus. How You care for everyone. You have plans and purposes that mean we must be married to fulfill those plans. And You will do what You started to do because You're faithful and we trust You. Lord, we commit these things into Your hands. Thank You for our time together. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

I love you guys. I tell you, I'm sorry you're going to tar and feather me, but you know, it's good to fellowship together on things that concern us so much. May the Lord help you.