

- I. Session 8: Courtship exercise Godly wisdom and prayer
- a. Purpose: Today we will see the importance of exercising Godly wisdom and prayer whether the person you are courting should be your spouse.
 - i. Point 1: It is important to find the right person
 - ii. Point 2: How do you find the right person then?
 - b. Point 1: It is important to find the right person
 - i. Scripture is clear that marrying the wrong kind of person can be troubling
 1. What marrying an ungodly person is being compared to according to the Bible:.
 - a. *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.”* (Proverbs 12:4)
 - i. Note the latter half of this verse.
 - ii. She is like rotteness within the husband’s own bones.
 - iii. There is a sense of tragic irony since in creation Adam said about his wife as *“This is now bone of my bones”* in Genesis 2:23 as a sense of how close she will be to him as a helpmate. But now the wife is something that hurts his own bones!
 - b. *“And the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.”* (Proverbs 19:13b)
 - i. Notice the comparison of a contentious wife to dripping water.
 - ii. This is to be understood in light of Proverbs 27:15 which gives us more details.
 - c. *“A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike; He who would restrain her restrains the wind.”* (Proverbs 27:15-16)
 - i. Again, another comparison in Proverbs of a contentious woman to dripping water.
 - ii. Also a comparison of her being unable to be restrain by the wind.
 - d. *“Like a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from his home.”* (Proverbs 27:8)
 - i. Many of these passages address men about marrying the wrong woman, here it addresses about a bad family man.
 - ii. “The word "wander" may have the notion of going into exile. Septuagint, "As when a bird flies down from its own nest, so is a man brought into bondage when he is banished (ἀποξενωθῆ) from his own place.”” (Source: Pulpit Commentary, available through <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/27-8.htm>)
 - iii. Thus this is the idea of a husband who has abandon his home; it is as unnatural as a bird abandoning its nest and responsibilities and area of protection.
 2. “BETTER THAN...” comparison: It is better to be originally single than to be married in some instances.
 - a. *“It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”* (Proverbs 21:9)
 - b. *“It is better to live in a desert than with a contentious and vexing woman.”* (Proverbs 21:19)

- c. *“It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.” (Proverbs 25:24)*
 - ii. Scripture is also clear marrying the right person can prove to be quite a blessing
 - 1. Marriage in general is a blessing: *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD.” (Proverbs 18:22)*
 - 2. *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.” (Proverbs 12:4)*
 - a. Note the first half of this verse.
 - b. She is like a crown.
 - 3. *“House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD.” (Proverbs 19:14b)*
 - a. Notice the second half of the verse: The trait of prudence in a wife is a gift from the LORD.
 - b. Yet the first half of the verse is about great gifts from human father which are inheritance of *“House and wealth”*
 - c. The first line and second line relate in that Proverbs here is making a comparison that God’s gift of a prudent wife is greater than anything that man can give!
 - iii. Therefore one needs to be very careful of whom they want to court and consider to their future spouse.
- c. Point 2: How do you find the right person then?
 - i. Two principles: Seek wisdom from God and pray.
 - ii. Seek wisdom from God
 - 1. The following are four practices.
 - 2. **Fear the LORD** first since fearing the LORD is the beginning of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:7)
 - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)*
 - a. Fearing God entails acknowledging Him and His laws.
 - b. It involves submitting to Him and His laws in life.
 - c. APPLICATION: Search your heart and ask, Do you fear God before anything else such as not being in a relationship?
 - 3. **Ask** God for wisdom because He will give it (James 1:5)
 - 4. **Read the Word** of God which is where God’s wisdom is stored (Excerpts of Proverbs 2:6-19)
 - a. God has revealed His wisdom: *“For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.” (Proverbs 2:6)*
 - b. His revealed wisdom will give discernment concerning life’s choices: *“Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course.” (Proverbs 2:9)*
 - i. Note the consequence of God’s revealed wisdom is that *“you will discern”*
 - ii. Wisdom revealed from God will lead one’s *“every good course.”*
 - iii. Every good course include’s one’s decision of courtship and marriage.
 - c. The reason one can discern every good course is because one receives God’s revealed wisdom into their heart: *“For wisdom will enter your heart...” (Proverbs 2:10a)*

- d. One of the consequences of internalizing God's revealed wisdom is it protects a Christian from the wrong person to be in a relationship with:
 - i. Wisdom protects you from the unfaithful, who will leave you (**Proverbs 2:16-17**)
 - 1. "Strange woman"
 - 2. "Adulteress who flatters with her words"
 - 3. (One who) "leaves the companion of her youth"
 - 4. (One who) "forgets the covenant of her God"
 - ii. Wisdom protects you from the ungodly, who self-destruct with you (**Proverbs 2:18-19**)
 - 1. "her house sinks down to death"
 - 2. "her tracks lead to the dead"
 - 3. Her partners will not "return again"
 - 4. Her partners will not "reach the path of life"
- e. Application: Are you in God's Word daily to be wise in all aspects of life so as to discern the total life of a potential candidate?
- 5. **Obtain counsel** from God's people and their Godly wisdom
 - a. Receiving godly counsel is wise
 - i. Beware of being wise from only your perspective: "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes*" (**Proverbs 12:15a**)
 - ii. Rather, receive other's counsel: "*But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*" (**Proverbs 12:15b**)
 - b. Receiving godly counsel leads to success
 - i. Without counsel, it leads to frustration: "*Without consultation, plans are frustrated,*" (**Proverbs 15:22a**)
 - ii. With many counsel, it leads to success: "*But with many counselors they succeed.*" (**Proverbs 15:22b**)
 - c. Application:
 - i. Have you asked God for wisdom concerning who you are courting?
 - ii. Do you regularly read the Word of God for wisdom? If not start with the book of Proverbs.
 - iii. Do you ask regularly consult the wisdom of God's people concerning a decision of whether to pursue a particular person, and whether you two are ready to court?
 - iv. Ultimately wisdom stems from the desire to love and obey God (there is the "fear of the Lord" dimension). After knowing what is right and wise do you live it out? Does that person fear the Lord and desire to live out the Christian life as well?
- iii. Pray
 - 1. **Ask** God directly in your prayers for a spouse
 - a. Jesus teaches us to ask God (**Luke 11:9**) because He gives (**Luke 11:10**)
 - b. Paul also teaches that we can pray for everything (**Phillipians 4:6**). This includes relationship!
 - 2. **Ask** God to reveal His will for your life: "*For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,*" (**Colossians 1:9**)

- a. Notice Paul's prayer is for the church be "*filled with the knowledge of His will*"
 - b. If you desire a marriage to please God and be spiritual you can pray for God's will with the person you are courting too.
3. **Search and destroy** for wrong motives in what you ask from God, in light of **James 4:3**
- a. People can have ulterior motives in asking for a relationship (distraction from family problems, idolatry of romance and sex, because being single will be viewed weird by peers, etc)
 - b. Don't just identify wrong motives, go to God for repentance.
4. "**Be anxious for nothing**" because "*your requests be made known to God*" (**Phillippians 4:6**)
5. **Thank** God for being single and also whatever the outcome is ahead of time, since our requests ought to be "*with thanksgiving*" (**Phillippians 4:6**)
6. **Accept** whatever God's Will and answer is
- a. Jesus taught us how to pray (**Matthew 6:9a**) by requesting that God's "*will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*" (**Matthew 6:10b**)
 - i. This is true concerning the big things of God, stuff which are heavenly.
 - ii. This is also true of earthly things such as courtship and decision of whom to marry.
 - b. If you struggle to accept God's will, look at Jesus' example of submission to the will of God the Father in **Luke 22:41-42**: "*And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."*"
 - i. Do you realize this is the only prayer that God the Father answer "no" to Jesus?
 - ii. Yet we are saved because of it!
 - iii. Meditate on this truth and let it move you to accept God's will whatever that is in your situation.
 - c. Accept whatever God's will is with thanksgiving (**Phillippians 4:6**)
7. Application:
- a. In your prayer, do you do the above?
 - b. Do you also ask God to open and close opportunities?
 - c. Some of you might have been single for a long time and might have been discouraged to pray about marriage. Don't stop praying!
 - d. For some of you who are in relationship already, don't stop praying! Just because you are with someone in a relationship doesn't mean you are married yet or it is for sure that it is God's Will! Pray!
8. Picture: I like what Marshall Segal said: "Prayer is not a side dish for followers of Jesus. It's the oven. God meant for every other part of our lives to be prepared and refined through prayer."¹

¹ Marshall Segal, *Not Yet Married* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2017), 94.