

Spiritual Discipline of Emotional Chastity

By: John Coe

Well, it's a privilege to be here with Torey. You know, I was an undergrad 32 years ago. Wow. I was a Bible major, and you know, I don't remember ever anything on sex and the soul. Sex and the soul. Not that the issues or the problems were any different 32 years ago, or 32 hundred years ago. So I just want to commend the administration, Todd and others, who wanted to address this. This would have been such a good thing had it been addressed, I think for many of us, at Biola. I don't remember talking about it, especially last night, the issues of homosexuality.

Those become private things and that's not such a good thing. Well, I want to talk this morning about spiritual formation and romance because romance, dating, I don't know if you, do you date? Is that, is that a thing here at Biola?

I don't know, maybe we call it something else so I don't know, maybe pairing off or whatever this stuff is. There's a new name, what is it called? Oh, OK. Can't get into it. Ok fine.

But romance. It's, it has to do with spiritual formation because romance, it takes us right to the core of our being, as we're going to talk about this, and romance is a, it's a wonderful topic.

I mean, how many of you like watching romantic films? Raise your hand, or books? Yeah, all the rest of you are liars. You all love this.

My family, we love this, you know this is, we like watching Pride and Prejudice. You know in romance?

[Audience cheers]

WHOO yeah! Remember, you know, Jane and Mr. Bingley, you know, they just, in romances they just keep missing you know, and then Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy they just keep, and then at the end of the film. I mean, don't you want to just interrupt the film and say, No, no sit down and talk, we can work it out. Well, at the end of the film, they finally come together.

Ah. And then the movie's over! I mean, what do you do now? Have a movie about marriage?

Wow. Now, I taught at Rosemead also for about the last 20 years while teaching at Talbot as well.

And what, here's, you know whether you know you need marital counseling is you're a couple watching a romance film and it's wonderful, when you're crying at the end, and then when you turn on the light, and you look at one another; if you want to go back to the movie, you know you need counseling right? Then you know you need counseling. Well, right now, my daughters are 14. And for the last two years, we have engaged in really the most incredible dialogue about romance and crushes. When this first started happening, I was kind of whoaaaah, should we go here?

And I said, no God, I am going to go because now they need to explore their gender. And we have had the most incredible experiences talking about this. One of my daughters actually has a list, it's called "My 100 and eight crushes."

Wow. On that list, she showed it to me: Harrison Ford, Orlando Bloom, right?

[Laughter]

WHOO! Dominic Monaghan, whoever that is, Steve McQueen, you know, and then Mr. Bingley, Mr. Darcy, but I really like this one: the random faun of Prince Caspian.

Well, you know what happened. We watch Prince Caspian and this guy came on for like, two seconds, and she went 'Whoo! He's on the list.'

Well then we uh, one night we were coming home, it was just a few weeks ago.

Lately they've been wanting to watch movies like The Matrix and X, you know, whatever. I don't know what it's called.

And, and they said, Dad, can we watch Bambi tonight? I said, oh that's cool. Well, we got to that part, I don't remember. I mean, how many of you have seen Bambi? Yeha. Do you remember the part of springtime when everyone gets twitter-pated?

Right, well, you know these guys, you know springtime, the birds and the bees and everything. And when, you know, when Bambi and Thumper and Flower see she, right? Whoo! Twitter-pated. Remember Thumper? [BADADADA tapping foot]

Well, we were laughing because when my daughters were 4, they didn't get it. They got it now.

Because this last summer, my wife and I really committed to wanting to bring together males and females and so, we scheduled about 20 outings of times of maybe 15, 20 teenagers, males and females getting together. That has been an incredible time. But there's a, there's a darker or maybe a sadder side of romance. Let me just paint a few scenarios.

This is one that our therapist at Rosemead might see. It's a couple who, when they were during the dating time, they couldn't get enough of one another. They wanted to be face to face. Remember C.S. Lewis, you ever read his Four Loves, remember romantic love is when you want to be face to face. You can't get enough of the person. And so the woman in therapy says "You

know, before we were married, he couldn't get enough of me. We wanted to be together all the time. And I would even tell him sometimes, "it's 12 o'clock. Well hey, you got to go to work tomorrow or tomorrow you got a test."

"Ah, don't worry. Don't worry, I'll, I can live on three hours sleep." That's because he's, they're living on romantic love, is such a wonderful time. And now she says, I don't know what happened.

Ever since we got married, he will sit on the couch, watch TV all the time. Or he's out pursuing now his career or at work all the time or studying.

I tried to share with him last night.

I was just pouring out my heart in bed to him and he interrupted me and said, "You know dear, it's 11:00 and I need to get to sleep." Wow, what's happened here?

What happened where just three or four months ago, he couldn't get enough of her, and now things changed. And we hear this over and over again. Or here's another situation. This could be here at Biola: a young man and a woman, you're dating or whatever you call it.

Now you're getting together, you're pairing off and you're getting deep, you're drinking deeply of one another. You're having incredible experiences, maybe even the physical you're struggling with, but this is a real relationship.

And then at some point, one of them, it might be the woman, it can be either way. But we'll say it's the woman who begins to say "what about marriage?" And all of a sudden she recognizes in him a real reticence. Whoah, the M word, and all of a sudden she doesn't hear from him for a week.

Well, they've been going together for a year. And then all of a sudden she gets a call and says "You know, I think we need to talk." And they get together and he says, "You know, I've been really praying about this."

[Audience laughter]

"You know, and the Lord has really shown me, oh boy, you know, I think we need to just back off." Wow. Wow. She walks away and it could be reversed, she walks away devastated. Oh my gosh, it's like part of her was ripped out and it's over there now. And he walks away, "whew." Wow. Relieved. Wow what's going on?

Or perhaps it's a couple who have been getting to just, again, intimately growing together, enjoying one another, loving to one another and then all of a sudden they get pregnant.

Wow. What do we do now? Do we get married? We're 21. Do we get an abortion? Wow, an abortion. Adoption. Wow, this is way before I intended. Or what we also hear is individuals who, who get so close together, they're juniors or sophomores and they're enjoying one another, and they're so deep, and they're so deep, and the parents are saying, "whoa slow down."

No, it's moving fast, and all of a sudden they're married. And after two or three months of marriage, one of them, maybe both, but usually one wakes up and says "Oh my gosh what did I do? Is this the person I'm going to be with the rest of my life? Wow, is this really the one? Wow, I don't even have a job! What are we going to do?"

Lots going on here. What is going on in these experiences?

I want you to take the handout. I hope you have that, because I'm going to. I made this handout so you could just have a lot to take with you. I don't want this to be just a presentation, I

want you to think about this, because this is your life. This is your life. And I want you to open your heart to God. And so, I want to begin in Roman numeral I. And you can just follow with me, and I'm going to be kind of skimming through. I want to begin with the truth about some things with the Scriptures.

Now you're going to know some of these things, so we're going to kind of go quickly, but I want to remind us, I want to start with the word of God. So it can help frame how to understand what's going on in this thing. The first one is this: that we're made for Union that we're made for union, we're made not just for relationships but we're made for a deep relational experience, with a spouse if we choose, but ultimately with God. Remember this is Genesis 2 where the Lord said, I mean, here God was with Adam, but he said "you know, it's not good that he's alone. And so I'm going to make him a helper suitable." In the Hebrew it's literally corresponding to him, I'm going to make someone that, that's his B of A. It's just the one that corresponds. And so for this reason, man shall leave father and mother, and these two are to cleave, and they shall be one flesh. Wow, this is something unique.

And when Paul talks about this in Ephesians 5, he says "You know what that actually referred to? It referred to what is going to take place between Christ and the church, we're made for union." This is not just I'm made for relationships. This is I'm made for something really in the deep. So here, I'm a friend of Todd and Todd's a nice guy. He's, he's good. Yeah. And here's another male, ah, you look good. Ah, another male. Yes good.

Whoa. Lisa. Whoah, whoah, another, whoah, she, who's she? Issha, remember in the Hebrew, whoah, who's that? Well, at 17, 18, that's when I met who's now my wife of 33 years, when I met Greta, boy, it was like whoa Yo Ya Whoo, Yeah da da da da da.

[Laughter]

See, this is not, you really have to get this: romance, when we think of sex and the soul, romance is taking you right to the core. You know what it ultimately, it's a type of? It's what your relationship with God through the Spirit is going to be one day. So when we talk about romance, when we watch those things. Man, this is going right to the heart, because you know what we want is we want to be loved perfectly, we want to experience something at the core. So this is deep and this is wonderful. And so, in number 2, just to move through these, these texts to frame this.

There was an original design by God for how man and woman were to relate in marriage. See, woman was, man was to leave father and mother, he was to leave being mommy, I'm to leave that world and I'm now to take up, to cleave to her that is, I'm to seek for her welfare. I'm to take her into my life and to take care of her and the woman was to be a helper. They were to seek mutual welfare, but in number three, this didn't work out. In number three, the fall and original sin changed everything.

Humans were born, as Paul says, spiritually dead. We're born dead in our trespasses and sins, and what dead means is, we're born without the spirit of God. This never should have been that way. You should have been born filled with the Spirit. But in original sin we weren't.

And the result is we're all born with now this huge relational hole.

Not only do I have part of that hole that I can have for Greta, but God was to fill me right from the core, and now I'm born with this huge hole and the temptation is going to be is I'm going to use things to fill that. And you know what the number one thing I'm probably going to use? Another person. In fact, romantic love, romance, I'm going to try to take the other and stuff

them inside. And so number four, romance and marriage in the fall get all distorted where each is trying to use the other.

The temptation for a man will not be to cleave and to take her in and to care for her; it will be rather to use her. And then, even what we see in marriage so typical, is once the man has her, he then disposes of her, puts her aside as he pursues other things. And the woman's temptation, rather than to help, he's going to, she's going to use the man to meet the storehouse of needs in life. So I'll have to say, when I see wedding vows, those are high things man. To honor and cherish in sickness and health. For better or for worse. Wow, when I see vows, whoa. Because if we had an x ray machine so we could see into the heart, it might be also this:

I need you so much and I'm sorry, but my needs are so great sometimes that I'm probably going to have to use you. I'll love you. But sometimes I won't. When it's too painful. Please love me.

Or why do we have so much divorce, if there's not something else in the heart. And so in 5, gender relations, they're still a wonderful thing. But in Christ, we're to do it in such a way that results, as Paul will say, in possessing our own vessels in sanctification and honor. Not defrauding or trespassing against one another.

If you have the outline with you, I want you to actually read this text with me out loud. This is first Thessalonians, chapter 4, verse three to seven. I want us to read it out loud just to hear the word of God on this. Let's begin. For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion like the gentiles who do not know God, and that no man defraud, I'm sorry, transgress and defraud his brother in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity but in sanctification. Wow, this is serious. We are called to possess our vessel, our whole person in sanctification and honor in a certain kind of noble way, and not as he said, transgressing and defrauding. Those of you who, you know, know the Greek, you might want to look some of this up. This is fascinating. The idea of two transgresses is to step over, and the idea of defraud, Paul uses it elsewhere, to take advantage. He says you'd better do this in such a way that you don't, you don't transgress or step over the other.

Step over boundaries or take advantage of the other, do not defraud your fellow believer in this matter of sexuality.

So given this capacity for union. Given this capacity we have to bond, but given the fall, how did the ancient spiritual writers think about this?

Well here, we're at Roman numeral two, and this is, this is really what Dallas Willard was talking about yesterday. This is a spiritual discipline of physical chastity. Now chastity, that's almost a swear word today right? Chastity. What? Here's chastity. It's the habit of body and spirit. This is, this is your whole person, it's going involve your internal world, it's going involve your body, whereby you constrain your good and natural bodily sexual appetite. See, you have a sexual appetite, and there's so much to be said about this that we're not going to talk about here.

You have a sexual appetite, and chastity was to restrain that before marriage in order to channel that energy for relational work, to take that, that passion that you have and now to channel it for work with God, work with others in a healthy way, because that's going to be the fountain or source of sexual bliss later on. Believe me, in marriage, relationship is the fountain for sexuality, but this isn't going to be my interest today, because it turns out there's two kinds of

lust, and I'm going to be interested in the second. So here, I give two kinds of lust here, and the first one is, is what I think Dallas Willard was interested in yesterday.

This is what I might call purely sensual or non-relational lust. This is when the physical desire for sexual stimulation is done outside the dynamics of a relationship. In which the partner of sexual satisfaction becomes an object of view. See, this is random and multiple-partner kind of sexuality, this is pornography. This is auto eroticism. This is where we don't need a partner, in fact, a partner is irrelevant. Now, if we were gonna talk about that, that's a serious issue. That's a serious issue, to bring your sexuality into non-relational experiences.

It is. It's rending and divorcing sexuality at the very core because one flesh union was to be sexuality and love. And now you read this, and there's some deep splits in a person.

And I know this. I struggled much with this, in high school coming to Biola. This is a major issue. But I'm interested here in number two. Relational, or what I would call romantic lust. This is when the physical desire for sexual union is nearly naturally trying to catch up with the emotional intimacy and union that has already developed prior to a covenant commitment in marriage. See, this is relational lust. This is that, that individual, the problem in my mind isn't the physical.

The problem is that these individuals have become now so close, so intimate, they, they've shared the deep, that the physical is just wanting to say, hey, come on, let's get it on, babe. Because he wants to bring it to fruition.

And so I just, so I'm going to be talking to you today about relationships. And I'll just say this: if you're in a deep relationship, a meaningful relationship, and if you're struggling sexually, the problem is probably not physical.

The problem is probably emotional. The physical is just catching up.

I love it when I used to hear, you know, a professor of mine joke about students who've really gotten to know one another, and then they go out in some nice moonlit night under a tree to pray together. Whoah. No, you know what's really going on? They're bonding and he's Twitter-pated. So it's evident to me there's a third kind of lust, and this perhaps is what I'm most interested in.

If there is this romantic lust, I call this one the lust for romance, the lust for romance. You don't have to have a boyfriend or girlfriend to do this. You can be married and still be in this. This is the illicit drive or temptation to satisfy our desire for relational and emotional union with a person prior to a covenant commitment in marriage. I want you to think about that. This is the illicit drive or temptation to satisfy that. Is, this is a desire to, I want to fully satisfy this craving and this desire to, to have an emotional relationship with another person. And we're talking here about the opposite sex.

To have that experience, but prior to a covenant relationship in marriage. You see, this lust for romance is just going to lead to the other relational lust.

The body will just try to catch up with the soul.

And so I think before marriage, we can spend an awful lot of time focusing on trying to use somebody else to take away some deep loneliness. And this is what I want to talk about. And so this is Roman numeral 3. This will be kind of the focus for the rest of the time. It is a different kind of spiritual discipline. It's the spiritual discipline of emotional chastity. And the spiritual discipline of emotional chastity is this: it's the habit of body and spirit, it's the whole person, whereby we constrain, there will be a constraining again, of our good and natural relational capacity for emotional union with the opposite sex.

So here I have the capacity as a student here, as a young man, as a young woman, I have a capacity to relate with someone of the opposite sex in a deep way, but I'm going to restrain them. In order to channel that energy for deepening healthy legitimate relations with Christ and others, I want to take that and I'm not going to give that away yet. You, each of you have something to give away. And it's that capacity for union. And in this discipline of emotional chastity, you're not going to give that one away.

Rather, you're going to channel that for developing this relationship with Christ and others, especially those of the same sex, but others of the opposite sex in healthy ways. And then for advancing in wisdom in the Spirit, regarding whether I should marry or not, who I should marry, what is it to marry in Christ, how do I know if I'm ready? Because see, that's the ground for future intimacy and union with God and spouse. And I'll just say, if some of you try what I'm going to talk about today, some of you may find, hey this is good; and others of you may say this is a bummer.

Because man, there's a big hole in here. I need that guy. I need that girl. Because doggone it, when I'm really by myself, I'm so doggone lonely. I really need that. And so, if you, all discipline, spiritual disciplines, when you engage in them, we often don't love them.

We actually and typically see what we really love, and that's a great thing to know.

So here, the question for us is this: how do we grow, how do we do this, how do we grow to possess our own vessel in sanctification and honor? How is it that I can be around others so I don't defraud this woman, I don't defraud this man? So I'm going to talk about five questions, and we'll just see how far we can get. And I may have to just kind of gallop around here, and as we're going through this, I just want to be clear, this is a little bit of Dallas Willard language now: This isn't going to be so much a rule. This is going to be more of a vision for living and

we're all in the mix of our own virtues and vices. And there is, I do not want to discount that there is in each of us, this deep hunger for relational union. But we need to condition it by holiness and seeking the welfare of another. So here's the first question. What is going on or what's often going on in this emotional lust for romance and dating that makes it so difficult to practice emotional chastity? What's going on here? And I think in general it's something like this: what often goes on in romance and dating, it's the attempt to fill a deficit need or a hunger for emotional union with someone of the opposite sex.

It's the desire to feel that need and it's a deficit need now in the fall.

But to do this, prior to being psychologically, spiritually or circumstantially ready for this covenant commitment. See, it's the attempt to use another to fill the deep hole before we're ready for responsibility of that relationship. And it's going to feel so good. I remember dating. Oh, did it feel so good.

Dating Greta. Mmm yum. Mmm oooh. Don't worry Greta, I can sleep on two hours. Mmm yeah. You know, when you're twitter-pated, you don't think any more. In general, what's at work in the woman? In the fall and in of a deficit need, there is going to be a tendency or a temptation. This is, now, this is just a kind of hypothesis of what's going on here. There's a temptation on the part of the woman to use the man to be fully and deeply known and loved. The woman is longing to be explored. She's longing to be cleaved to, she's longing to be emotionally, if I could use the word, emotionally penetrated. To be, to be known in being loved, to be fathomed, to meet a storehouse of emotional and relational needs, and it's to do it before wisdom dictates it's the time to do it. And it's the, at the expense of seeking his welfare because the need is great. I want to be loved. I want to be known and I say this: this will be exacerbated by the woman if they have not been deeply loved and known perhaps by their father or earthly father. In

general, what's going on in the man? In the fall and in this deficit need, I think there is going to be, and this is what I've observed.

I saw it in myself and others: a tendency or a temptation to use the woman in meeting his needs for zest. For emotionally experiencing the woman, and wanting to find her out.

Now of course, men want to be found out too. But here, there's a great, a great zest and excitement of Whoo! Getting off on exploring her deep. This isn't just sexual. Now this is emotional. He wants to emotionally penetrate her. He wants to find her out. I think of, guys sorry, I think of you as little bees who are pollinating. Bzzzz ZZZZZZZZNEWWWWWW

Oh, there was, I don't think hardly anything more exciting in my life, other than coming to the Lord at 19, than getting to know Greta. Gosh, Lewis was right, face to face. You know, romance is actually a form of rudeness. You know that? Have you ever been around two people who are really into one another? It's like Wow. Everyone else doesn't exist.

I won't tell you some stories. Yeah, I have some make out stories, I won't get into those. Yeah. I'm sorry, [laughs] ok, yeah. Lots coming back.

Download by the Spirit here. [Laughs]

Okay, second question. But I just want to say this on the first: lots going on here.

Women want to be known, they want to be penetrated, they want to be loved. And you know, that's going to take place someday, hopefully, with a man or with the Spirit. And the woman want, and the man, he wants to be known too, but he also wants this zesty experience, to, the thrill, the excitement of knowing her, exploring. You can't get enough of one another, it's face to face. Second question: what dynamics of the heart drive this woman and the man in this lust for romance? What's going on in the heart, because ultimately that's the issue.

It's the issues of the heart that drive us. And so, I just say, the first dynamic of the heart, it's just endemic to what it is to be human now, because we're made in God's image. We are made not just for relationship, I'm made for union. But on the other hand, there's a big problem and there's a huge hole there and that huge hole is something that only God was to fill. And this is going to be in the Old Testament, the essence of idolatry. Idolatry is anything that I use, as Isaiah says in 45, to, to fill myself, to deliver myself. And so it might be pleasure, it might be pornography, might be money, but there's no better object than romantic love, because in romance, man, it feels so real and it feels so good.

So we're made for these deep relationships. This is, this is the basic issue here. And yet they're distorted. But I want to talk about a second dynamic, and this is second dynamic that I want to look inside the heart a little bit. I want to see what might be going on in some of us and I think this, there could be many issues, as I talked to some of our psychologists here at Rosemead. They say, John, we could, we could do many things now on this. I'm just going to mention two, and I'm not going to use psychological terms. I'm just going to give them a little name here and I call it the Cinderella complex and the Peter Pan personality.

There are some Cinderella's and Peter Pans. Now it could be reversed, it's fine, we have some male Cinderella's and female Peter Pans, that's fine, it's just what's going on in the heart. In fairy tales these are wonderful stories, but in real life they're tragedies. They really are tragedies. So first regarding the Cinderella complex in some women, perhaps some men: you know what Cinderella really was? Cinderella is the rejected girl, she's been rejected by family in the world. Cinderella, she's called Cinderella because she's sitting in the cinders. You know what cinders are, they're ashes.

She's sitting in the ashes and she dreams of a man to rescue her from being unknown and unloved. Here's some potential capacities or some elements of the Cinderella. There is an all-consuming desire in the woman for a man to come, and maybe for the first time in her life, to be rescued from loneliness. To rest, be rescued from the loneliness so that she can experience being loved deeply and known deeply.

It's the hope that some man will come and find her out. It's the hope that some man will come and explore her and cherish her for who she is, but in number two, this normal urge for emotional union has been exacerbated. It's been distorted. It's been increased by a deep pain of unloved. It's a deep pain of not being known. It's maybe having gone through your family experience and coming here to Biola and you felt maybe even loved by your family but has anybody ever really known you for who you are?

You know the task, that the parents, there aren't many parents here, but I'll say this: the task of a parents,' particularly the father, is to take the young woman on a deep journey into her heart so that she can be known and loved in her depth, so she can, she can know what it is to be treasured as precious. See, the father was to carve out a place of something in her that's precious. So she would realize this: I'm not giving this out to anybody. I know, I know what it is to be known and to be loved.

Students who come to the ISF, you know what I've heard for the last seven years? Most students will say this: my parents loved me but they didn't know me. And as a result, you've been a good girl, you've done lots of good things, but there's deep, deep parts of you that want to be known and want to be cherished and want to be loved.

And you can't, some of you can't wait for someone to come in and do this. And sometimes, number three, this need for love becomes so dramatic that you become what the proverbs calls the unloved woman.

This is when that relational hole for God is so deep, the pain of rejection may be there, the desire is so carnivorous, it's just I've got to have someone to know me. Proverbs 30 is a profound text. It was really written for the young men. It says that there are, and I quoted here, he says that under three things the earth quakes, and under four it cannot bear. There's four things the Earth can't handle: a slave when he becomes a king, a fool when satisfied with food, and notice this, and an unloved woman when she gets a husband. Wow, wait a minute, the unloved woman when she gets a husband?

Isn't that a cool thing! The woman who's been rejected, when she finally gets the husband Who! Isn't this going to be great? And the Sage says, no, the Earth won't bear it. You see, in each of these cases, there's some deprivation that has built up a deep, deep hunger, a ravenous need that cannot be controlled. And when it finally gets what it longs for, you know what it will do? It will ravage things. When the slave, he wants to be on top and when he finally gets as king, he's going to crush others. And the fool, right, he's not supposed to have money, and when he finally gets money he's going to spend his money on doing foolishness.

And now the woman, oh this is sad. The unloved woman remember, this is Genesis 29, where it said "Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah." And in verse 31 it said, "And the Lord saw that Leah was unloved." The Hebrew is the same: unloved or literally hated, rejected. You see, when, when a woman is unloved or when the woman is not known and there is this huge hole, it's going to leave a deep wound, and you know in dating, in dating I'll just tell you guys, it will

feel great to date an unloved woman because she can't get enough of you, she'll love you, she'll adore you.

But that's just the truth: she can't get enough of you. And it's going to feel good in dating: she needs me, she loves me, she hungers for me, she wants me. But in marriage, you know what it will be? Such a sad text, it will be suffocating. Because her needs are going to continue to ravage you and rather than now turning to help you, rather she's going to continue to ravage and use you to meet the storehouse of needs. This is a very sad verse. Now some of you were greatly loved by your father.

That's cool. Some not so. Some have experienced rejection from friends or those of the opposite sex.

But I think in the fall, we're all going to have this hole, we're all going to be affected.

And I think all women to some degree are going to feel a little bit like the unloved woman.

But again, it comes in degrees, and that proverb was really written for the man. Man, watch out.

Regarding the man, this is the Peter Pan personality. And I say in number one: if boys stay enmeshed with their mother, if they stay enmeshed in what I would call mommy love. You know what mommy love is? It's, I'll take care of you, you don't have to grow up. You can just be mummied all the time.

You can be babied. And if he never has a deep relationship with the father so that he identifies with masculinity, with the idea of taking care of someone, their welfare, or he has a weak father, an uninvolved father, a strong mother, then you know what that, that man, but really

he's a little boy in a man's body, what he might come to think in his deep is that he can have life on his terms; that he can have women on his terms; that he can have dating on his terms.

He could have life on his terms without taking responsibility and the tendency in dating is then to experience all of you. See number two, this is the Peter pan. Remember? I won't grow up! It's desire on the man's part to experience. You might ask yourself, do you know of any Peter Pans here on campus, where they desire to experience all the pleasures and all the fruits of intimacy without taking responsibility for the relationship? See, the Peter Pan wants to experience all of her, even sexually, but I'm just thinking emotionally right now. He wants to experience the whole person. Everything, but without responsibility. In fact, when issues of marriage or responsibility come up, Peter Pan starts freaking out. And Peter Pan goes to prayer.

Oh, God get me out of this. Peter Pan in three, he's a tragedy because he wants life on his terms and to escape responsibilities. We won't read the text, but this is Proverbs 31:1-9. This is a guy named King Lemuel, and his mother gave an Oracle and the oracle to King Lemuel is "Hey look, son, you're a king. Don't give, don't give yourself to lust and don't give yourself to drugs and drink. Rather, give yourself to taking care of the welfare of others." This is going to be hard. Young men like myself, I remember, no, I wanted to escape. And so I think the truth is we're all a little bit of a Peter Pan, we're all a little bit of a Cinderella, it's all a matter of degrees. Come back to that wedding ceremony. Now I'm 52. So when I go to a wedding now, I got married at the wise, ripe age of 19.

Wow yeah. Wow.

And you know, our wedding was like, oh I don't know, a couple hundred bucks. Light some candles, off you go. It's cool. I love you Greta, haha. And I love you John. God has been very gracious. These 33 years. Now, when I look at weddings today, man, it's a, it's a fiasco.

People at campus tell me ten thousand, they spent ten, fifteen thousand dollars on a wedding, I'm like wow! Well you know, when I'm watching that wedding and it's a veil occasion, I can't help but thinking, there's a Peter Pan and a Cinderella in there. And if I again had an X-ray. If I could really see into the heart of their wedding vows, I think I would see a little boy saying, "Mommy, would you please love me and would then you would, you let me experience all of you, and then would you let my do my thing once we're married so I can play with my toys."

And I think I might see a little girl in part saying something like this, "Oh darling, would you please fill me? Would you please take away my hurt and my love? Would you know me? I want to be known and loved so much." Now if any of you actually use these in vows, would you invite me to that wedding? A third influence. This is just something to think about, something that I've just pondered. And this is the practice of dating, the practice of maybe doing premature pairing off as an exercise, and here's what I would think, and I think spiritual formation: it's perhaps a training of our spirit in unfaithfulness.

If we're doing this prematurely, what on earth are we doing? And so here, I call it now the spiritual vice, or at least the problem of premature dating or whatever this might be and it would be this. Number one: it's the practice of uncommitted romance in which one experiences the fruit of gender relations. So you are experiencing how wonderful it is to engage in union but without the corresponding virtue of taking gender appropriate responsibility for the relationship as in marriage. So having the fruit, it's experiencing this without the commitment of marriage and all that's going to take place.

I cannot tell you how often I've heard this in counseling and experience. Individuals who were doing one thing prior to marriage and it seems so great, and then when marriage occurred, things began to change. Because, and the reason is, because the dynamics that were going on

here which felt good were actually not good. Because they really weren't seeking the welfare of another. And when it comes into marriage, it all falls out now. You see that both of them were actually Cinderella's and Peter Pans engaging in meeting their own needs. That's why marriage is so hard.

It's so good. Greta's my best friend. She's the closest person in my life. I love her more than anybody else.

But it has been the place of refining. Because there is no doubt when you marry, you will discover selfishness like you have never discovered, and in dating, you don't. It is an amazing thing. And so I say in two, thus uncommitted romantic relations are often a kind of practice in unfaithfulness, it's something to think about. More than in being faithful to a relationship, a training in being intimate with a person to whom you're not committed yet, you're not ready to commit.

And so it's actually training our capacities for union but without the boundaries of caring for a welfare. You know what it strikes me as a little bit? It's like training ourselves for divorce and adultery.

Now this doesn't mean that there's no way to date that's appropriate. I'm not saying that, there may be fine, great ways, because I'm enjoying these with my daughters right now, to, because there's nothing more pleasant in life than enjoying the opposite sex. There's nothing more wonderful, even prior to marriage, just wonderful, the experiences we can have. The question I have is that pairing off, deeply pairing off, looks like it only makes sense when both know they're ready for marriage because what the heck are we doing? So third question is: what are the signs to help you know if you're dating, or with, or you are, a Cinderella or a Peter Pan, what are some signs? Now I didn't write these down. I threw in so much in those notes. So if you

want to take these down you can, I'm going give you some signs. Here's the signs of Peter Pan: whether you're a Peter Pan or whether you're dating one, whatever it is. Here's number one. You know you're dating a Peter Pan to some degree, you know, you know you're dating a Peter Pan, number one, if he won't take no for an answer. If he won't take no for an answer. If he wants what he wants? If you can't set boundaries for him, then you know you're marrying or you're dating a boy. You're dating a boy, and you're mommy, and he expects mommy's going always say yes. Second thing: you know you're dating a Peter Pan or you're with the Peter Pan or you are one, if that person feels hurt or rejected when you try to set boundaries.

If they feel hurt, rejected, they feel pushed away, and you feel they're always pushing the boundaries, and that they won't respect what you feel about things. Then you know it's part boy.

Now I just want to tell you right now: you're going to marry part of a boy. Because marriage is what's going to help him grow up. So this comes in degrees. But let me tell you right now, women: help him grow up before. Third: you know you're dating a Peter Pan if he wants to experience all of you, he wants to experience, even physically, but even emotionally, he wants all of you but not responsibility.

Not commitment. Then again, this is a boy attached to mommy.

And so, number four: if this is going on, then you know to some degree you got a Peter Pan. And you're going to have to learn how to say no and he's going to have to learn how to hear no, to begin to seek the welfare of another. Now signs of a Cinderella. Here are some signs.

You know you're dating a Cinderella or maybe are one, number one: If she cannot say no. If she cannot say no.

If she cannot say no emotionally, psychologically, or physically. See, in that case, her hunger for you, her hunger to be known and loved is so great that she's lowered her boundaries and she wants you to come storming in.

Second thing: you know maybe this is a Cinderella if secondly, she wants you all the time. She wants you all the time and she's possessive ahead of what the stated commitments are. See, maybe there aren't really stated, agreed-upon commitments in this, and and yet there's jealousy, wanting you always. Wow, what's going on here?

There's a hunger. Third: you know maybe she's a Cinderella if she is willing to give more of herself than you've even asked for. Somebody thrusting herself on you, losing self-respect because there's such a hunger. Well then, to some degree, maybe you're dating a Cinderella and you know it's going to feel so good now but it's going to involve all kinds of complications as time goes on.

Now fourth question: how do we address this? What do we do with all this? How do we address this lust for romance that ultimately leads to this relational lust? See, I'm not worried about those of you who are in deep relations and you're sexually struggling. That's secondary. It's the relational experience you're having. That's what I'm concerned about. So again, as, as Willard says, this isn't, these aren't rules, this is a vision. This is a vision. Think about it. First one is this: my general advice, I'd probably say something like this.

Probably don't date or don't pair off, don't, don't engage in this full exposure in one another until you've determined the following.

One: that you're ready to marry, that the other person is ready to marry.

You need advice and thought about this, and that you're reasonably convinced that this may be a good partner. And that the circumstances are such that it seems wise, that as you've,

you've considered my education, work, finances, travel, all the things I've wanted to do, I cannot tell you how many individuals that I have known who got married way beforehand.

Because they got involved in a deep relationship too early and then struggled for years and years financially and doing the things that they really wanted to do and having regrets. Now you know something? Once history passes over, God redeems everything. But if you're standing on this side of marriage, the Old Testament sage would say, "Hey, this is your life. Consider your steps. This is your life. What do you, what are you doing?" And so five, when all seems ready, then begin to spend more face to face time. Again, I don't have a policy on this. Just reasonable, wise, enjoy.

Enjoy. Practice seeking the other's welfare. You know, if you're in a relationship, just ask how much do I really want that person on my terms?

How much do I really spend seeking their welfare? So you still need, even here you need to exercise emotional chastity because you want to protect the relationship and practice for marriage, of protecting the boundaries of another. See, well, why do you want to do this? Because you don't want to be in a place where you're training your spirit now in unfaithfulness.

You don't want to get into a romantic relationship that's, that's leading so fast and you're thinking, my gosh, what. I'm only a sophomore and we're really deep. I'm a junior and we're really deep. Wow. Where's this going.

That's heavy. Now 6: How do you know if you're ready? How do you know if you're ready for marriage and all this stuff? And you know, part of me says, who knows?

Big question. You know, getting married is a little bit of a crap shot. Yeah, 7-11, WHOO. Snake eyes.

You know, proverbs says this: that the wise man considers his steps, but the fool goes on to destruction. This is the time of your life to consider your steps. This is the time of life to gather yourself, what is going on? There's a great proverb. Proverbs 24:27, it just says this, really practical: prepare your work outside, make it ready for yourself in the field, and afterwards then build your house. That's wise. See, the idea here is: make certain you've got all the elements necessary to build a house. Get it all together.

Then build it. The application here is get everything ready emotionally, financially, doing the education, the experiences you want, the right person, take it, get all that ready, then marry. You know, but we want it now and I'll just say this: if you're, if your hunger for another is so deep, this will be hard.

Because when the hunger is there and a person is meeting that need, wisdom can just PEW, go right out the door. So B. Practice the discipline of emotional chastity. Let me give you some things here. And this will be a kind of list. I'm going to go through this. These are things to ponder. This is a vision. Is this a vision for your life? Is this something you want to consider? Ways to constrain this hunger for union, first for the woman, number one: begin to see yourself as a natural resource, to be protected and prized. Women, I want to really encourage you. You are a natural resource and for men, you're going, for one man someday, perhaps, if that's the way God or maybe it's going to be for the Lord. You are going to be the pleasure and the joy of somebody else. I want you to guard that. I want you to, to find that place in you that is precious, that is not to be just given out. You are a natural resource. Number two: allow your dad, it should have been done, but maybe it still can be done.

Or maybe it's going to have to be with a spiritual father or a spiritual mother to find someone who will help you find that place. Who, and you know who it's going to have to be?

Someone is going to have to get to know you who is older and responsible, who can take you on a journey so that you can experience to be loved and known in the deep. That's to carve out that precious place. That's only for the one who's willing to commit themselves to you. Don't give this out to just any thief. Three: I want to encourage you women, commit yourself to not tempting men to know you deeply without "that's the person that we're going to be together."

Beware of, of wanting to bring someone in and then to use them to meet this deep need. Find that through others, others of your same sex, or therapy, spiritual direction, especially an older father and mother. To begin to open up the heart in a deep way. Practice keeping your deep. Practice keeping your deep a little to yourself. If you are in a relationship right now, don't just share everything. If that person is wanting to explore, just say, No, no, that's not for now.

Practice carving out in yourself that you are precious, and then I say in number 4: beware of Peter Pan. He looks like an adult, but in fact he's a little boy who wants to fill himself with you. In zest.

He wants to experience you but he's not ready. And so you have to say "Am I dating a Peter Pan right now? Can he take a no?" "Am I a Cinderella. Can I say no?" You must learn, you must learn to set boundaries for the sake of your soul, for the sake of your marriage. I want to go back to the scenarios that I shared in the very beginning. You know, in psychology we say this: that little boy of four, there's a certain psychological name for this, little boy of four. He's out playing and then he runs in and he attaches himself to his mommy. And then when he's filled up on mommy, he runs back out and plays with his toys. And then at some point, [sighs] hey mommy! Whoom, runs back in, fills himself up with mommy, runs out. Now when you're a mommy, that's cool. Let the child go.

But when you have a husband who does that. This is a problem. Because here the husband hanging on, clinging, using you, mommy, during the dating and romance, and now in marriage the psychology. Now there's a deep psychology here and a theology about this. But once marriage occurs, the individual has mommy secured here and now he's out playing and the woman. I cannot tell you how many times we hear this over and over again: What happened to my husband? He couldn't get enough of me. And now he's doing everything else under the sun.

What's going on? Well, it's because the child has mommy, and the little boy now is going to be on a major track to grow up. Or it could be the situation of the dating has been so fun and it's been so wonderful. And then all of a sudden, one of you talks about marriage, and the other is freaking out, Oh my gosh. Oh God. Give me an answer.

The boy is shaking. He's not Twitter panting now. He's really shaking. Number five. If you've already given out part of yourself to another, this is hard. This is hard, because I know some of you here have had relationships where part of your heart is over there now, especially you women. You have already given out parts of your heart and maybe even to a couple in here, gah, the pain of this. This is where you're really going to need some wisdom to explore, to think through this. You're going to have to go slow. If you're in a relationship right now, you're going to have to really ponder this about what would it be to pull back, to find a healthy place here?

There's going to be some need of wisdom. There may be some hurt, there may be a need for forgiveness. For some of letting go. If you're married, this would be a whole other discussion. If you're, if you are married, and you find that you married a little boy, you're going to have to help him grow up. There's a whole story there.

I'll say this in seven: for women, if you practice this discipline of emotional chastity, I want you to recognize, I do not want you to repress. I want you to recognize there's a deep desire

for union, but I want you to be honest, because there's a part of you that maybe will not want to do this. There's part of you that may not want to do this. And so you're going to have to take that hunger or that hurt and you're going have to find God, find others appropriately, find a spiritual adviser, someone to begin to take you on a journey in your deep which you were longing for in the first place.

Just some ways for the man: if you're tempted to be one of those pollinators, any bees floating around here? To explore the woman without a price, you need to let go of this. You need to rather commit yourself to protecting. You need to commit yourself, rather than to explore her, to help her carve out her space. That's for her, and especially for the one that she'll marry. Number two: avoid the vice of curiosity. You know what that is? That is the voice of wanting to know something that you shouldn't know yet. If you're not ready for marriage, then you're not ready to know her at the deepest emotional level. Let me just say this again to you guys. If you're not ready to marry, then you're not ready to know her at the deepest emotional level. You know I, I shared some of this about six or so, well, no actually about seven, eight years ago, before we started the Institute at Biola chapel. And when I shared that, I had a number of women coming up to me later in tears about their experience and I had guy's kind of standing a little back. They looked a little guilty.

They hung around and they came up and you know what one of them said to me. They said, "You know Dr. Coe, you know the truth is, I have," and he used these words. "I have emotionally fornicated with so many women on campus.

What you described. That's just what I've been doing." Wow. Wow. Number three: just beware of tempting the woman to be found out. Beware of asking those questions, those

searching eyes, that you'll see, seek her out. Number four: beware of being lured into the woman who has no boundaries.

And I'll say this. Number five: if you've already failed in this, or in something now, you're going to have to think about this. You're going to have to get some wisdom, you're going to have to maybe deal with some guilt, some pain, some letting go, some asking forgiveness. If you're married, and your wife is an unloved woman, cleave. Take her in deeply now.

Now is the time. And again, I'll just say in general: for some of you men, this won't be fun. Do not repress your desire for union, do not repress your sexual desire. Use this to explore deeply what's going on in your life. Some general thoughts. I'd just say this: if you're not committed to marriage, I would say this right now, in a relationship, don't act like it.

Secondly, enjoy, enjoy opposite. But here's where I would say with C.S. Lewis, enjoy side by side relations. Face to face is when you're ready to really plumb the depths. Side by side, and be open to making a decision. Be open to exploring this person without full revelation. Wait for marriage. Some of you, you know what you should go on is maybe a wisdom retreat.

You need to go on a retreat. Set a date with God and really explore for whether it's 2 hours 5 hours: God what's going on my life? What's really going on? What's going on between me and this girl? Me and this guy. What's really taking place? You hold your life in your hands. Now God is sovereign. He will use all things, but on this side of marriage, consider your steps. Fifth question, the last: What are the risks? What are the risks we take if we don't deal with this? I'll just say this, if you're in a relationship, the physical will want to catch up with the emotional. But I'm more concerned that you'll develop intimacy with a person just before the time is right.

It might be the wrong person or you'll come to feel that way later. God, was this really the person? Or it'll be ahead of the time. What you want to do now is you want to develop

healthy ways of relating now that can be taken into marriage and that's seeking the welfare of another. I conclude with this: there is no rules for this. Paul just tells us. Whatever you do, you're to possess your person in sanctification and honor, and he says this: don't defraud one another, don't step over lines, don't take advantage of another.

How are we going to apply this? For some, you might listen to this and say hey, this has been wise, while others saying, aww, I don't know about this stuff. And other's saying, Wow. I don't know if I want to do this. Just open to this: God. Wouldn't it be great? This is the vision Willard talked about. God, wouldn't it be great if I could possess my relationships and my person in honor and holiness.

Wouldn't it be great, God, if this relationship I have right now, if I could, if I could not defraud her. God, wouldn't that be great? You don't, just you maybe go away 15 minutes thinking about that. Wouldn't that be great if I could do that?

Lord, what does that mean? What are the intentions I'd have to have? Maybe you need to start talking with friends about this. Maybe you need a spiritual director, maybe you need a therapist. Maybe you need someone to begin to explore deeply what's really going on. I just want to say this. Be willing to open your heart to this and slow and steady, slow and steady. I'm going to pray and then, Todd, you can come up. Father in heaven. Lord we, we hunger in our deep to be loved perfectly.

You take this seriously, Lord. I can only thank you that we are in Christ fully forgiven, fully accepted for all of our failures. So we come to you. You might just take a moment right now in the silence of your heart and just ask the Lord: God, what is the state of my, of my heart in this? Am I possessing myself in holiness when it comes to my sexuality and my desire for

another? Just ask the Lord, what's the truth of what's going on in my life right now? He knows all anyways.

You might ask God, give me wisdom. God, give me wisdom. Open my heart in love. Father, do bless these students. God, there are so many lives here who have come to give themselves to you and to the training of their souls, their body and spirit in wisdom, knowledge and holiness. God, watch over them just as you watched over me when I was here. In my folly but in my desire to grow. Watch over us, in Jesus' name, Amen.