

Being Single

By Mary Ann Lind

Announcer:

Welcome! It is my joy to welcome all of you to the first elective session of Torrey. Um, if you were here this morning you were probably - I was absolutely blown away. By what I heard and by what I saw and what I experienced. And I trust that the rest of this week - I am excited! And I hope that the rest of you are too. I have never seen Calvary Chapel packed like this. So this is wonderful. And I think that it's definitely a testament to the fact of who we're about to hear. So I'm gonna first pray and then I'm gonna welcome our presenter for the afternoon.

Dear gracious Heavenly Father. I'm just thankful for the activity that you show us in our midst before our very eyes Lord. I thank You Lord for this morning. And just for what took place in my heart and even those around me. I just praise You Father that you do not sleep and that You are always at work, and that You are continually calling and pursuing us. And I pray Lord that we will more valiantly call on You and pursue You. I thank You for this time and may You just have it. Do with it as You desire. Draw our hearts into You so that we leave just more in love with You. In Your precious and Holy Son's name, Amen.

Um, we heard her this morning in morning chapel and I know I was deeply touched. It is my joy and privilege to welcome back Mary-Ann Lind. Thank you.

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Lind:

I am truly amazed at how many of you are here and I know you have to come to these sessions. But nevertheless I thought everybody would be across the way to hear about Love, Courtship, and Marriage because that's an awfully a lot more exciting - some people think. But I want to tell you that being single is very exciting as well. And my prayer this afternoon is that I can somehow convey the joy that I've had in walking a single life to you, ah, knowing that God has a unique plan for each one of us.

Some time ago I was speaking at a women's luncheon and at the end of meal time the lady next to me said, now I'll be introducing you so I need to know a few things about you. Are you married or single? And I said I'm single. And she said "Oh," [audience laughter] "I have a niece in that condition, too." Well. Hehe, let me tell you. Being single is not a condition. A condition is having the flu or something even worse but being single is not a condition.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy he was talking about money. But in the context of talking about money he writes something else. Paul writes in first Timothy 6 "Godliness with contentment is great gain." When I was growing up, my father was a very devout Christian and he always used to say to me "Mary-Ann, you need to learn to be content." And those words still ring in my ears, and the fact that he must have had to repeat it so often must have meant that I must have been a very discontented child, because he had to keep reminding me of that. But I know that the words that the apostle Paul is saying are so true for our lives, whether you're married or single. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

I want to start out by saying that there have been many many times in my life that I said "God, I thank you for the gift of being single because without it, You could not Husband me the way You do. Without it I couldn't know You the way I do." Now Francis Chan, whom I love and respect, gave you a little glimpse this morning of what it's like to be married and to have children. And one of the things is you don't have much time to yourself. The apostle Paul wrote that people who are unmarried can devote more of their life to the Lord. But I want you to know from the outset before I go on sharing, that I don't believe God created us to be married. I don't believe God created us to be single. God created us to do His will. And I think the issue for us as Christians is "God, can I do Your will better being single, or being married? Because I am open to both?" Now I'm not dead yet. [audience laughter]. Thank you. And so I don't know what God has ahead for me. I celebrated a birthday two weeks ago. I'm not gonna tell you which one it was, but uh, I'm getting up there. But I'm still open to whatever God has. I just want to be obedient.

And what has happened to me in my life is so astounding because I never dreamed it would happen. As I'm going to share with you tomorrow in my general session, I grew up in a farm in North Eastern Colorado, I was this little farm girl just running around wild and crazy on a farm. I never dreamed what God would have for me in my life. I gave my life to the Lord when I was 15 years old. And by the time when I was through college I was getting a little rebellious and getting involved in Eastern religions, thinking that this faith of my parents wouldn't carry me through life. Well, fortunately I finally came to my senses. But there did come a point in my life where I finally realized, yes, I'm a Christian, I'm born again but I've not made Jesus Christ Lord

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in my life. There's a difference. I think that there are Christians who go clear through life and never make Jesus Christ the Lord of their lives.

A young woman once came to an old Scottish preacher and she said, "You know, I'm really struggling with being single. And I'm really struggling with trying to figure out what God's will is for my life. I think I know what He's telling I'm supposed to do but I'm still struggling." And so this old Scottish preacher took out a piece of paper and he wrote two words on it and he gave it to her. And he said, "I want you to take this piece of paper and meditate on these two words. And I want you to cross out one of them. And I want you to come back to me and show me which word you crossed out." The two words that he had written out on the piece of paper were "No," N-O, "Lord." And she realized what he was saying. If you cross out "No," then you cannot keep the Lord as Lord of your life. If you cross out Lord, then you are saying No to him. Those two words have to - those two words cannot go together. You cannot say "No! Lord," and still call Him Lord of your life.

And so there came a point in my life when I had to make Jesus Christ Lord of my life and I'm going to tell you when it was because it has to do with the whole issue of being single. I've had four proposals of marriage in my lifetime. I mean, it's not like I'm some left over. [audience laughter/applause]. Thank you. I cannot engage in self-pity and say "Nobody ever asked me." Well, it's been a conscious choice. I'll tell you the first one and maybe you can learn from it. If you can learn from my life, so much the better.

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First relationship was my boyfriend in high school. I was a junior in high school when Danny Shepherd and I started dating. And then I graduated from high school and I went on to college and by my first year of college I'm thinking, "You know what, this guy is boring!" [Audience laughter]. Coz you see what was happening to me, he was a farmer. There's nothing in the world wrong with farmers. I love them! I was raised on a farm. But our interests were different. We were about to go in different directions. And so let me tell you this. If you're dating and you begin to notice that you and the person you're dating have different interests, for heaven's sakes don't try to re-make yourself to fit them! Be yourself and trust that God's going to bring someone to you that fits your personality, your interests, your needs, and especially your call on life.

I used to be a missionary in Asia. I worked for Youth With a Mission, YWAM. Youth Without Any Mates [audience laughter]. Or sometimes Youth Without Any Money. Most of the time! It was great though. Anyone here ever work for YWAM? [a few cheers in the audience]. Oh, yes! Yes. The rest of you should. It's great. I used to say, you know what we should do? We should combine YWAM and Biola. I don't know what we would call it - Biola-WAM or something like that. Anyway, we would, I always said we should have every student at Biola go through a discipleship training school like YWAM requires, right, and then send them on an outreach in a mission field somewhere. And then bring all of them back to Biola and take regular classes and have them grounded in the word and grounded in historic Christian faith and solid evangelical education. But they've never taken my advice.

But anyway, I was a missionary with YWAM. One of the things I noticed on the mission field was on several occasions I came across couples that were very engaged in mission work. I

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remember when I was in Madras, India there was a couple. He was very engaged, just loved India! Just wanted to save all of India. His wife obviously didn't wanna be there. And I came across occasions like that several times, where you knew that this is a couple that both of them didn't have the same call on their life. So if God is calling you to the mission field or if God is calling you to the ministry of some kind, pastoral ministry or whatever form it might take - if you do marry, make sure that your partner has the same call of God on their life otherwise it's a formula for discontent and unhappiness.

So, okay, I broke up with Danny Shepherd. Then the next one during my kind of rebellious stage in my 20's. I won't say a whole lot about it, except for that it was an ungodly relationship and I knew it all along, my parents were not pleased, I really wasn't happy, but I told myself "Oh well. You know, I'm young."

Don't try to alter God's word. I remember when I taught here at Biola I had on at least two occasions I had a student come in who was dating someone. And my first question would be "Is he a Christian?" and on the other occasion it was a guy and I said "Is she a Christian?" and on both occasions I get the same answer, "No, but I'm working on her, I'm working on it." Forget it. More often than not it goes the other direction. If you are dating a non-Christian you don't even have to ask God for guidance or His will, coz it's already in here. I'm going to be talking tomorrow afternoon about getting guidance. If it's already here you don't even have to bother asking because God's already given you the answer. He says Do not be unequally yoked with non-believers. Period. Don't think that you can bring them to the Lord. Don't think that after

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you're married somehow he or she is going to turn into this great paragon of Christian virtue.

And so I broke up with Gary Underwood. Thank heavens.

The third person was a real scholar. He was a law professor. And when we met we were studying at Oxford university during the summer. And the room I was in had a problem with plumbing and so they moved me to the men's dorm [audience laughter]. That was nice. I want you to know, I'm the one that messed up that plumbing [audience laughter]. Nah, I'm just joking. So they put me in the men's dorm. It was the only one available in that particular college at Oxford. And so I was down in the men's um, the lavatories were separate from the, where you wash your hands. And I'm here washing my hands and I look and this guy says hello, "hello." And that's how we met. And when we came back to the United States we continued to see each other and he proposed to me. He was what I would call a nominal Christian. He'd say to me, "Mary-Ann, the thing I admire about you is the way you go to church. I really like that. And how you read your Bible all the time." But the only problem was, he wasn't. See he admired it in me, it's like he wanted my coat-tails spiritually. It was very tempting to marry David. But deep in my heart I knew: This is an Ishamel, not an Isaac. You know the difference? It's when you get in a hurry. And so with great pain we broke up with each other. And I just simply said "David, we are Not - we're not equally yoked. You're not the kind of Christian like I'm a Christian." It was hard for him to understand and the reason it was hard for him to understand is coz he wasn't. You understand what I mean? You just know when you find a spiritual soul-mate.

The last time was here in Los Angeles. It was about five or six years ago. I was teaching here at Biola, I was dating a man who was wonderful. He was absolutely wonderful. He loves the Lord.

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He teaches at a Bible college. But there was no chemistry. You know what I mean? Or as Dolly Parton says, "he didn't melt my butter" [audience laughter]. So, haha, what you have is all these scenarios that when I look back I kind of chuckle and I make jokes about it and I certainly don't want to disparage any of these men. The last one, incidentally has since married and is very happily married. I rejoice for him. They have a new baby. It's obvious she's much better for him than I was. And she's nuts about him. That's the way it should be.

Now, as we wait upon God for His will for our lives, what should our attitude be? I want to suggest four attitudes this afternoon. Now I want to read something to you that I cut out of the Denver post last Sunday. You all know who Oprah is - Oprah Winfrey. She apparently um, it says here that her friend's name is Graham Stedman, or Stedman Graham, yeah, Stedman Graham. He's 51. Oprah is 48. And they've been apparently in a relationship for many years. And so she was asked, "How come you don't get married?" Now here is one of America's most influential women. In fact there are some theologians who say we are hearing the gospel according to Oprah. I also saw a new adjective recently, "operatization," - the operatization of our culture, that Oprah is transforming our culture. She was asked why they didn't get married after all these years. She says, quote "Stedman is a very traditional man. And the word "wife" would mean more to him than me. He would think I have to behave like one." Well, excuse me. How dare he think that if he married her then she would have to behave like his wife? I mean that's the kind of thinking. That is so twisted. That is so unChristian. That is so a violation of the Scripture. So if that's what she thinks of marriage she's better off not to marry him. But she is also I would assume, in an ungodly relationship with him in violation of God's scriptures.

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But the, I only read that to you, I was struck by that knowing what I was going to speak on here. I only read that to you to give you a glimpse of what the prevailing culture suggests. "I don't wanna be a traditional wife. Are you kidding!?" Probably means submission and all that stuff. Well, let me suggest four attitudes to cultivate.

Number one. You must see marriage with reverence and humility. Now I get these from a man who I greatly admire. He's in his 80's now, Dr. Derek Prince, a former professor at Cambridge university in England who's been married twice in his lifetime, widowed. In each case - in the first case his wife died then he remarried. But I respect his opinions about marriage. He married much older in life. Here's his - fantastic Christian! Fantastic bible teacher! He says number one, you should adopt a reverence toward marriage and a humility. You see, I think that our culture has put marriage on some kind of pedestal like it's romanticized, uh, candle-light dinners, flowers, string music playing in the background, sunsets on the beach, forever! [audience laughter].

On the other hand, you also see in our culture, including the sitcoms on television, that absolutely make a mockery of marriage! Or you have people in our culture who are cultural icons who have made a mockery of marriage. One marriage after another. Recently Julia Roberts got married in New Mexico - I'm preaching now, I'm sorry, I'm off - recently Julia Roberts got married in New Mexico, do you remember reading about that, this big wedding, they flew everyone in to Taos or Santa Fe or some place. And on the morning news, Good Morning America, they were recounting this wedding and all the money that was spent and all the planning and all the secrecy because they had to fly in all these celebrities. And then one of the

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personalities on Good Morning America said something about, "Well, I hope it works this time." I thought, yes, that is a commentary. Our cultural icons - whether it's Julia Roberts or Madonna, or for the older crowd, Elizabeth Taylor, who's been married so many times it's in the double digits I think. They've made a mockery of marriage!

Or, the counter part of that is those who don't get married, like um, what's uh, Susan Sarandon, or Goldie Hawn, who say, are you kidding? Get married and ruin this good relationship? And so the standard that they are putting forth for a whole generation of people is: Forget marriage! You don't have to be married to have this wonderful relationship.

But you and I have a guidebook that tells us otherwise. It says for one thing that the marriage bed is pure and undefiled. If you're going to have sexual relations it's supposed to be within the context of marriage. If you're going to obey God's law then you cannot treat marriage with the irreverence and the arrogance that we see in our culture. In fact I notice, I frankly don't watch a lot of TV, I certainly don't want to convey to you that I watch a lot of TV, I don't. Frankly I don't have time. But what little I do see seems to me is making the assumption in so many cases that you, the viewer, already agrees with the presupposition that it's ok to live together outside of marriage, that's just a given!

Okay, Number two: Recognize your self-worth. Recognize your own self-worth. I guarantee you dear students, you are not going to derive your self-worth from another human being. It's not like somebody else is going to make you complete. Those of you who used to have me as a professor for "West in the World" remember I always used to say Colossians 2:10, Colossians 2:10, I am

complete in Jesus. And I always used to say - and I still see a few familiar faces like Tina and some others - I used to say if I could un-zip your head and put a verse in and zip it back up, that would be the verse; Colossians 2:10, I am complete in Jesus. You don't need to lose 20 lbs, you don't need to buy a new BMW, you don't need to get a new wardrobe to be complete in Jesus. You don't need to get married, you don't need to stay single. None of these things will complete you. Your completeness, your self-worth is in Jesus Christ, and if you have this sort of idea that "If I could just find the right person I will be complete," No, you won't! Unless that person is Jesus Christ. And I have already said to several men that I've dated, "I love Jesus more than any other person in the universe. No man is going to take the place of Jesus in my life. If I ever marry, it has to be a man who's willing to take 2nd place to Jesus. And if he's not, forget it. Because I will not take Jesus off His throne and put somebody else there. So, unless your self-worth is derived from Jesus, don't look for it somewhere else.

Number three: Have Healthy Relationships - of both sexes. And let me emphasize the word healthy, have HEALTHY relationships of both sexes. If you are female, you need healthy male friends. Just guys to talk to, guys to hang out with, not in a dating relationship. I have many male friends, some of whom are single, I'm going to see one Friday night. He's a lot younger than I am but we just have Such a good time together, a whole bunch of us are just gonna get together, just hang out, I can hardly wait! I'll be done with all my speaking, I can relax, can order a little pizza!

But I thank God for the men in my life. Some are married, and their wives are comfortable with me, they are also my good friends, so they are not threatened when I'm sitting over in the corner talking to their husbands or when I call and say "Hey Bob, I'm having trouble with my porch

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light. Can you come and fix it?" We need both male and female friendships - healthy friendships. Do not isolate yourself. That's one of the worst things that single people can do, because what that leads to is a pity party [whining noises]. No, No! Just forget it, forget that part! Seek out healthy relationships.

Number four: Honor Your Parents. Honor your parents. You might say, "What? What does that have to do with being single?" What's the promise that goes with that commandment? Ah, testing you now. Okay, question number one: What is the promise to that command? It's the only one of the Ten Commandments that has a promise with it. Honor your father and mother so that...? Yes? Pardon? [inaudible audience comment] You might live long, and? Be blessed. Or another version, King James may say "that it may go well with you."

When I was a missionary with Youth With A Mission among my friends and colleagues that I worked with was a couple from New Zealand that had been in the ministry for many many years. And when they would counsel one-on-one, they would often have a young person come in who had a very troubled relationship with the opposite sex. And the first question my friends would always ask is, "Tell me about your parents," and immediately they could tell by the look on the young person's face, by their eyes, what kind of relationship they had with their parents. And they said 99% of the time you could connect their difficult relationship with the person of the opposite sex with the way in which they felt about their parents. Now, you might be sitting there saying, "Mary Ann, you do not know what kind of parents I have. I mean, I come from a really dysfunctional home, and my parents are not the kind of Christian parents that you talk about when you were young. I wasn't raised like that," or you might have a parent that abused you. Or

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your parents might have been divorced when you were little. I wanna tell you, and this might be a hard thing to hear, no matter what kind of parents you have, they are the parents that God gave you, that God chose for you, and you need to honor them.

Now I have spoken at many many many women's retreats and one of the things that I often find in women who need to come to know the Father heart of God is that they have to release their unforgiveness, release their animosity toward their father. They cannot comprehend the love of the Heavenly Father until they release their unforgiveness regarding their earthly father. And believe me, I have heard some awful stories regarding earthly fathers - and mothers for that matter. I remember a woman in Hong Kong that I was ministering to, she was from South Africa and she said, "My problem wasn't my dad, it was my mother. I hate my mother!" And by the time we got done working through that and praying with her and she was able to release forgiveness to her mother her whole countenance changed. There's a reason why God says "Honor your father and your mother." It's because they are part of you, and you are part of them. So by dishonoring them it's as if you are dishonoring the very origins of your life. It's, to honor your parents is to say, "God, I thank you that I am born. I know that my parents were not ideal, but I just give them to you. I'm not responsible for how they raised me, but what I am responsible for is my attitude toward them. I forgive my dad for the words he said to me. I forgive my mother for the way she was - nagging," or whatever, whatever it might be. If you had wonderful parents, thank God for them, I did.

And some of you know, some of you don't know. The reason I'm not at Biola is because of my mother. After teaching here ten years, when I went back to Colorado to visit my mother that last

time I realized, she cannot be alone anymore. She was 88. And I realized, she's not bad enough to be in a care facility but she shouldn't be alone. And so I began to pray and God spoke to me through His word. I'm gonna share this with you tomorrow as well. It clearly says in first Timothy chapter 6. If a widow has a daughter, she ought to care for her. And I thought, "Woah! I never saw that verse before. Where did that come from?" No, I'm, I wasn't that flippant about it, but I knew the answer. I needed to resign from Biola University - best job that I've ever had in my whole life! Say goodbye to all my friends. And move to tiny little Fort Morgan Colorado, population 9,000 - if everybody's at home [audience laughter] - which they always are! Ah, it's about 70 miles northeast of Denver in an agricultural area. I'm teaching at a tiny tiny community college. I think we have 500/600 students. Ah, I am the entire social science department [audience laughter]. I am. That's the truth. I teach everything. You name it, I teach it. This community college is sandwiched between a cattle feedlot - it's just two buildings - it's between a cattle feedlot and an onion warehouse [audience laughter]. And right now on the other side they're building a huge Walmart. And everyone's excited - "Woah, Walmart's coming to town!" [audience laughter].

But you know what? I am learning so much there. So much! Last week I just listed how much I've learned teaching at that little community college. You know, one of the things I'm learning is how many problems people in the world have - most of it of their own doing. Their own decision-making. But I went because I wanted to honor my mother. I was there for 3 months and she passed away. I never thought it would turn out that way. Next to Jesus she was the most important person in my life. And so I spent last year on a grief journey. I don't remember last year, it's all kind of a blur. I do remember coming out here to Biola to speak. But then last Spring

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Dr. Bruce called me and said "Come back here to the History department at Biola," and I thought, "Wow! Of course! Thank you Lord!" And when I prayed about it, God said no. Then Dr. Panageas from ICS called and said how about coming and teaching at ICS and I thought "Woah! ICS!" Then God said no. So I'm in Fort Morgan, Colorado. I went to honor my mother. I believe that honoring our parents is not just until the day they die, but it's for eternity. It's honoring their memory. It's not bad-mouthing them after they die. It is honoring them. If they were less than perfect or are less than perfect, that's between them and God. They only parented you the best way they knew how. But you need to honor that. And if you do, it will affect your relationship with your future husband or wife.

I'm curious, is anybody in here married? Ah, I didn't think so. Did I see a hand back there? No, okay. They wouldn't dare set foot in here. Okay. Now, I want to very quickly share with you eight guidelines to follow. And I think that this isn't just as you're single, it's just eight good guidelines to follow. And then I'm gonna open this up for question and answer. Okay.

Number one: Obedience to the word. Obedience to the word. I just cannot emphasize the word enough. To be honest with you dear students, I think it's one of the reasons why God has me in that little town in Colorado right now. Because it is so boring that it forces me to spend a lot of time in the word and a lot of time with the Lord. When I was teaching here at Biola and when I was living in Los Angeles - you know what LA life is, I mean, it's fast-paced. And you have these palm pilots and day timers and you know, well I gotta check, maybe two weeks from now I can give you 15 minutes. I mean that's the way it is. I don't even need a day timer where I live

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now! Um, and so, get into the word. I appreciated what Francis Chan shared earlier about getting alone with God. And as I said, that's one of the joys of being single.

Periodically, I just go off - I have a directory, a national directory with all kinds of monasteries, convents, retreat centers, places where they let you come - there are a lot of them here in California. I used to go quite often to Santa Barbra, outside of Santa Barbra and outside of Solvang. Places where you can go for a day or two days, go away for a weekend. Sometimes I used to create my own mini-retreat. I could go down to the beach by myself. I didn't have to have a group with me. Just get alone with the Lord. It's a time of saying "Jesus, I crave your companionship. I don't want to talk to anybody today except you. I don't want to hear from anybody today except you. I love you, Jesus!" And so, obedience to the word. And the word says "Don't be unequally yolked."

Number two: Fellowship with other Christians. Do not isolate yourself. Are other Christians perfect? No. Are you perfect? No. None of us is. But relationships are where our character is formed as well. The Bible says iron sharpens iron. We need each other. We need each other's comfort, encouragement, concern, we need to laugh with each other, the gift of laughter. But we also need others to be accountable to. If you don't have anybody that you're accountable to I encourage you to get somebody to help walk you through your Christian life.

Number three: Be led by the Spirit. Jesus said just before he was about to ascend into heaven he said, "It is necessary that I should go so that He [the Holy Spirit] should come because He will guide you into all truth." The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and our Guide. When you accepted

Jesus Christ as your personal savior you became Spirit-filled. The Holy Spirit came into you. And I exhort you this afternoon to allow the Holy Spirit to control your life. The Holy Spirit will control you to the degree that you allow Him to. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He will never force Himself in your life. He will never force you to do things you don't want to do, but as you say, "Holy Spirit, have your way. Have your way, Holy Spirit," you will be led by the Holy Spirit. And you will know it. You'll know it. Just as I shared this morning, when I came face to face with this person who had hurt me so deeply, I know it was the Holy Spirit who led me to tap her on the shoulder so that we could have that hug. Instead of in my flesh, I would have turned and run, I would have turned the other direction. Be led by the Holy Spirit.

Number four: Guard your heart. Guard your heart. Because what rules your heart will determine the course of your life. How many older people, if they could share their life story with you, could say, "Ah, if I had a do-over. When I came to this cross-roads in my life I would have made a very different decision. But I gave my heart away. I gave my heart away to the wrong person." Or we give our heart away to the wrong things. Where is your affection this afternoon? Is it in your looks? Is it in your body, are you really into physical fitness? Is it into clothes? Is it into your car? Is it into academics, that you're a straight-A student, you've been an honor student? Maybe there are students here who are in the Torrey program, is that where your heart has gone? Has your heart gone to entertainment? Has your heart gone to sports? The Bible says "Guard your heart. For it is the wellspring of life." Our heart, which is the seat of our emotions, will determine the course of our lives. As I shared with you at the beginning I came very close at several occasions to giving my heart away to the wrong person. How devastating that would have been. How different my life would have been.

Be prepared to wait. Number five: Be prepared to wait. They that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. Wait. That's what I'll be speaking on Friday morning in chapel. Waiting on God. I absolutely believe, dear young people, that waiting is one of the most important aspects of our spiritual journey. Now, we have been led to think that the most important part of what we do for God is the activity, you know, it's when we're moving, doing things. Actually, the longer I walk with the Lord, the more I'm convinced that it's the waiting where the maturing takes place. It's the waiting part where He works deep in our lives. Be prepared to wait.

I've had some people say to me, "Oh, you're too particular. God'd have to bake a man for you. He'd have to put the ingredients in a bowl, put them in a mold, put the ingredients together and bake him for you!" Well, I don't think you can go wrong waiting for God. He will always honor that. I remember Lauren Cunningham, the director of YWAM said to us on one occasion, "If God has a mate for you, the God who put the universe into place, the God who hung the planets in their orbits, is perfectly capable of creating someone for you from scratch." Just, boom! There he is. Just appeared. Now that is - that's using one's imagination but yes, God is capable of doing that. Be prepared to wait.

Number six: Be prepared for death and resurrection. Death and resurrection. There is such a pattern in the life of a mature Christian. It is allowing something to die so that something else can be resurrected. I shared with you a few minutes ago that my mother passed away. Her death, even though my father had died earlier and that was devastating, but my mother's death has been the single most profound event of my life. I am realizing how much my life has changed because

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of September 7th, 2001. I will always connect the 11th and the 7th together. But what I am also sensing deep inside of me, as God has said No, you can't come back to Biola. At least I wasn't supposed to this Fall, I don't know what the future hold, but I am sensing deep inside of me the birth of something new. It's almost as if there had to be that death before God could take me on to the next thing. A resurrection of something else. I don't know what it's gonna be. But there is that pattern in our walk with the Lord, of death and resurrection. You have to allow a dream to die so God can resurrect it in His way. You have to allow a hope to die so God can resurrect a new hope in you. You have to allow a habit to die so God can resurrect a new kind of habit in you that's pleasing and godly.

There's always that pattern. Unless a grain of seed fall into the ground and die it cannot bear new fruit. Now if you know anything about gardening, if you know anything about farming, anything about raising food or crops or plants or flowers, that seed dies. And then out of that little crusty dead black seed, in a few days there's something green coming out of it. Alive.

Number seven. I cannot emphasize this enough! And I'll be talking about this more tomorrow afternoon: Seek the counsel of wise people. Seek the counsel of wise people. Psalm 1 says blessed is the man who sits in the counsel of the wise. I'm paraphrasing, but seek the counsel of wise people. If you are in a relationship with the opposite sex, don't go to your friends who are the same age as you and say "Hey, what do you think?" They're gonna say "hey, great!" [audience laughter]. Go to your pastor. Go to a youth leader at your church or go to a trusted older person. A person who has walked with the Lord a long time, someone who knows you. Someone who can observe your life. And be prepared for the counsel of a wise person to say,

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"You know what, I'm older than you are, I've walked with the Lord longer than you have. Be careful. Be careful. It does not look to me like this is a very healthy relationship." Are you willing to accept that kind of counsel? The Bible tells us we need to. In the counsel of many there is wisdom.

Number eight: Ask what will be pleasing to the Lord. "Lord, is this pleasing to you?" In the book of Esther, as she approaches the king. As she tries to establish authority with the king so that she can deliver her people, she keeps saying "if it please the king, if it please the king." I wanna challenge you this afternoon if you are in a relationship ask God, "is this pleasing to you?" And be prepared for His answer. If you're not yet in a relationship, ask God, "Is it pleasing to you, Lord, that I should be married or that I should be single?" Now God may say to you right now for this time in your life you have to be single, because He's got work to do in you. So don't get in a hurry. Don't get ahead of God.

Now it is also possible that God has in mind for you to be single all of your life. Please, don't give in to the pressure of our culture that says "Man, there is something wrong with you." And I'll tell you something else that's also a lie of our culture. And that is that if you're not having sex you're unhealthy, there's something wrong with you, you're deprived, no wonder you're so twisted. You Christians! So deprived, what's wrong with you. Good heavens, don't you know, it's healthy! That's not what the Bible says. If God has called you to celibacy, He will also give you the strength to do that. I bless the Lord for His plans for our life.

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I can tell you, as I stand before you, my life has been far more exciting than I would ever, ever, ever have planned! I've been to 55 countries, I've written 3 books, all kinds of articles. I've spoken to audiences all over the world, I never dreamed this is what the Lord would have for me. I would have settled for something so small. But I just said, "God, I want you to be Lord of my life. Every area of my life." Now do I get lonely? Absolutely! But I know I'm not alone. Sometimes when I hear my friends talk about their children I think Nxaw. And then you know what I think about? I think of students like Tina and others that I've had here at Biola and I think "I have lots of children!" They're all over the world. Some of them have graduated. Some of them have get married, they send pictures of their kids to me, some of them send me emails, "Oh, guess what? I'm in Washington D.C., here and there." It's such a joy to me. So please don't let the lie of the enemy cause you to walk away from that wonderful plan that God has for your life. God is good. And all of His plans for you are good. Please don't engage in self-pity. Don't think "Oh, woe is me," No! Rejoice in God's unique plan for your life.

I wanna close with this. As I stood by my mother's bedside and watched her quietly, peacefully slip away into eternity, I remembered that when I took her to the doctor - and I think in her mind she already knew that she wasn't coming home. I think she knew he was gonna put her in the hospital - she got all dressed up. She always liked to look nice. She always used to say, "How does this look? Does this look okay? You think Dr. Kreugle will like this?" I'm thinking Ma! It's just a doctor, he doesn't care what you're wearing. But she cared. I took those nice clothes home from the hospital in a plastic bag. Before we put her on the respirator, I slipped her wedding ring and her 25th anniversary ring off of her finger then onto mine. And she said, "they're yours now." And I knew at that point, she knew she was going home to be with the Lord. So she

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couldn't take her jewelry with her. She couldn't take those nice clothes with her. The only thing my mother took into eternity is what you're gonna take, and what I'm gonna take; our relationship with Jesus Christ. You're not gonna take a husband or wife. You're not gonna take children. You're not gonna take your degree from Biola, or your car, or your bank account, anything. The only thing that lasts through eternity is our relationship with Jesus. And that's what you need to cultivate most. And that's why God has you at Biola.

Father we bless You and praise You this afternoon. That You have seen fit to cause each of us to come to know You. We thank You Father for Jesus, precious, precious Jesus, who's our hope. He's our Husband, a husband to the husbandless. Lord Jesus, I pray that Your presence, Your love would so fill these students that they would know their self-worth is in You. And then Lord I pray also that Your perfect plan for each student's life will gradually unfold a step at a time. Lord, I know that You have marriage planned for many, many of these students. What a wonderful thing that's going to be. Our relationship with You is only compared to the relationship of the husband and wife here on earth. We are the bride of Christ. But Father, I also know that there will be some here for whom You have planned in Your perfect plan that they will be single. Whatever plan You have, may we seek godliness and contentment. May we seek only to please You and do Your will a day at a time, keeping in mind that blessed hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, amen.

Alright, I may be doing something risky here but I told Jenny I would allow questions and answers. Anybody? [silence] Okay Good. [audience laughter]. But seriously, any questions? Yes? [inaudible audience question]

Yes. That's a very good question. How do you - when I said have healthy relationships with members of the opposite sex, how do you keep it healthy? That's a very good question! I think one is to make sure it's sort of like a group arrangement. There is safety in numbers, shall we say. And also I want to really caution you, I guess that's the right word, based on my experience here at Biola, uhh, both males and females, against giving off the wrong kind of signals. Because members of the opposite sex can read the wrong thing into wrong signals. And so, as you young men, my goodness there's a whole bench of them over here, handsome guys, men, wooh! [audience laughter]. Any of the young men here, God is training you to be a godly young man. Be careful of the signals you give off. Ladies. Ladies. Ladies. Be careful the signals you give off. Don't give off the wrong signals. And now that I'm no longer teaching at Biola, I'm gonna say something that I used to - actually I said it after I resigned. You do know that Biola has a dress code? I assume they still have it. But I recall in the years that I taught here, when the weather gets warm, there's a lot more skin showing than there is on a day like today. Ladies, be careful how you dress. Let the Holy Spirit dress you, not Britney Spears [audience laughter]. Did you hear the guys clap? If you are dressing in such a way that it causes your brother to stumble with his eyes and his thoughts then you are not dressed by the Holy Spirit. So to get back to your question; how do you keep relationships healthy? I think that you also constantly commit them to the Lord, take them to the cross. And if you sense something becoming an unhealthy relationship get away from it. Separate yourself from it.

Um, I used to be invited from time to time to speak in the guys dorm when you'd have those meetings like in Emerson and Stewart. And each time I would always say to the guys, "Is there anything

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that you fellows would like for me to say to the girls because I sometimes go to the girls dorms and talk too?" And I was really surprised, two things. One of them came up quite often, it was about would you please tell the girls to dress more modestly? Girls, if you think that somehow by dressing immodestly that it's attractive to men, it's attractive but in the wrong way. It's giving off a message. And my guess, my hope I should say is that if you're at Biola University, that's not the message you want to give. But the second thing, I'll never forget this, this was in Emerson a few years back. The guys said, "Would you please tell the girls on this campus," - now I realize those girls have already graduated, you're a new crop, but - "would you please tell the girls that if we do something nice for them, like open a door or help them with something that they could maybe say thank you?" I was shocked. And then they went on to say "Yeah, we've had several occasions where we'd open a door for a girl and she turns around and says "I don't need any guy to open a door for me"".

Well, I was shocked. I would hope that maybe that girl has graduated [audience laughter], and that now you're all not like that. But please, revere each other as a brother and sister in Christ. Paul says that we need to see each other as equals. Esteem one another even as better than yourself. Both males and females. Girls, these are your brothers in Christ. Fellows, these are your sisters in Christ. You're gonna spend eternity together. So guard your mouth. Guard your thoughts. Guard your comments. Be particular about how you look and how you dress. You are a visible representative of Jesus Christ here on this earth, not just to the world but to each other. Thank you for your question. Any others? [silence]. Well I bless you, this afternoon - oh is there, is there a hand? Yes?

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[Inaudible audience question]. Hmm. Very good question, thank you. She said, was there a time when I realized probably I'm going to be single. Uh, yesterday [audience laughter]. No, I'm just joking [audience laughter]. Um, I, boy that's a good question. I guess I knew when I broke up with the law professor, because he was the one that I was the most attracted to and we probably had the most in common, other than our walk with the Lord. I think from that point on, I think from that point on also is when I said, "Jesus, You are now Lord of my life." That was when I began to realize, Okay Mary Ann, it just may be that you are going to be single for the rest of your life. Do you really wanna make Jesus Lord of your life?" Uh, but as I said at the beginning, I'm not dead yet, so, you know, who knows what God has. Uh, I just heard the other day about this couple that got married, I think they're in their 80's [pause, audience laughter]. You know, I might be in a nursing home, I might meet this guy in a wheelchair [audience laughter/clapping]. And we can go tooling down the hall, popping wheelies on our wheelchairs. We'll see, I'll keep you posted! Hahaha, any other questions?

Okay, I'm gonna let you go, we've been here over an hour - Oh, we have one more question, okay? [inaudible audience question]. Whoo, excellent question; how do you recognize your self-worth in God. I think that mostly it comes from here, getting in the word and then asking the Holy Spirit to cause the word to be deep in you, in your thought processes, in your emotions. God, cause this word to be life to me. Memorize scripture. I cannot emphasize enough to memorize scripture. In fact, when I taught here at Biola there were several classes where I gave students a choice; you can write a research paper or you can memorize a book of the Bible. Not a chapter, a book. You remember that? Uh, Great Asian Civilizations, any of you taking that course, or took it? I said Okay, you can write a research paper or you can memorize either

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Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, or Colossians. And I thought "they'll never do it!" First semester, 17 students did it. I thought, "They're faking! They didn't do this." So I would say okay, Galatians 2:7, what is it? Boom, he had it just like that. And I had students come up to me and say, "This is the best assignment I ever had at Biola." Because once you memorize scripture you're gonna have it the rest of your life. And I think, to answer your question, it helps build you up. It helps establish your self-worth.

I encourage you to engage in praise and worship. Put on worship tapes. Sing. Get, just get that constant word flowing in you and it will build you up. I think also if you are around people who tear you down you need to get with people who build you up. I sometimes talk about balcony people. Balcony people are the people in your life who stand up on the balcony and watch you run your race and say, "Yeah! You can do it! You're doing a great job! Come on, keep going, keep going!" We need people like that in our lives. We don't need basement people who are down there in the basement saying "Come on down here with me." You don't need those kind of people. You need people who are encouragers. People who build you up. And equally, you need to be that kind of person to others, who build others up. "Hey you look great today;" "Hey, I like your new hairstyle;" "Hey, woah, you look good today!" [audience laughter]. We need people like that in our lives. Okay. If you have individual questions I'll stay here. Uh, I have an appointment at 3 o'clock, it's ten minutes after 3 right now but that's okay, I'll stay here for you. So thank you so much for coming. Bye-bye [applause].

[End of Recording].

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