

Love, Courtship, and Marriage Part 1

By Dr. Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony

Announcer:

Alright, well it is my pleasure to introduce to you today our speakers for this time. I'm sorry this mic is too short. Um, Dr. Anthony has been a professor here for the past 19 years, you may have seen him around. He teaches in the Christian ed department at Biola, and his [announcer laughs] Alright. And his wife Michelle is both a Biola and Talbot student, so we know she is well-schooled. And she is working at, she is the director over all the youth in her church at Coast Hills Community Church where they serve. And they have lot's more to share about themselves, so I'm going to let them do that. So, if you'll welcome them up.

[Audience applauds and cheers]

Michael Anthony:

Thank you! It's good to be here, especially in this kind of a non-academic environment, it's usually a lot more fun, you don't have to take notes, there's no test on this, per se. In a sense there is a test, but it's a different kind of test. Because we are going to be talking about some different kinds of issues and life lessons. You know, one of the reasons we are here today, is to be able to discuss some really important issues. Now these are the kinds of life issues that are different from the kinds of life issues that you're getting in your classrooms. Now, believe it or not, years from now you'll look back at your Biola experience, and some of the most profound life lessons that you will have learned will not take place in the context of a classroom with a professor that you have paid to be there. Some of the most profound lessons that you learn may not take place in the context of a chapel, or some other formal presentation or seminar. Some of the most

profound life issues you will deal with here at Biola have to do with your interpersonal relationships. That is, dating, courtship, love, perhaps for some of you even marriage. Those are the kinds of life issues that will stay with you much, much longer than an exam or research paper that you turn in. And it is for the-that particular reason, that it is important that you think through and be very deliberate about your expectations of love, and courtship, and marriage. It is important to think through in advance what it is you're looking for in terms of character qualities of that spouse, that-that perfect mate that God will bring along your path. You need to think through in terms of who you're going to become. So that is a-that other person in your mind isn't going to, in a sense, complete something that isn't already there.

You need to be a healthy, whole, and complete person, even before you meet that individual. And some of that groundwork of becoming that healthy, whole individual takes place here at Biola even prior to you meeting02:38 that person. Now as she was saying in the introduction, I've been here 19 years. And over those years I've had a lot of students come to my office, obviously for academic advisement, for-but for other issues as well, because it's-it's just my nature to pry. I'm a naturally nosey kind of person, I guess that's why I like to work with the police department, as a chaplain, because I-I'm an inquisitive kind of guy. So a student comes into my office, asking me what class they need to take for their next semester, it's not very long before this conversation gets around to how you doing at school? How you doing in your social life? You dating anyone lately? That's just the kind of person that I am, because I know that's an important dimension of life that goes beyond academics, which is just one slice of our life's pie. And I want know what's going on in their lives, I want to pray for them, I want to cheer them on when they get engaged, or whatever the case may be. So those are the kinds of issues that I have

to-that I usually get into with my students. Now it's-it's interesting to hear the stories that I hear. I've got them on video tape, do you want to see some of your student-- no I wouldn't do that really.

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

But some of the women who come into my office, and I ask them, "Well what are you looking for in a spouse? In this perfect mate?" And they reveal to me what they're looking for in terms of, you know, that perfect guy, that-that number 10 man that's going to come along. And they talk in terms of that individual who is going to be a man, not a boy, he will have grown up and become a man by the time they get into a serious relationship. They talk in terms of someone who will provide for their needs, who will give them safety, security, someone who will project into the future in terms of a soul mate. You know, that's a completely different side of the coin from the guys who come in. See, when I ask that question of the guys, they're talking about a friend, they want a buddy, they want a sexual partner. Now, it's not as if it's a, it's a opposite kind of person, in a sense it's different sides of the equation, perhaps different sides of the same coin, if I wanted to use that metaphor. Because they're not mutually exclusive, but it's important as you begin to be intentional about what you're looking for, that you give some thought about what kind of a person do I want in my life, who will complement the kind of person that God has created me to be. Now as I said, I've heard a lot of uh stories over the years in the privacy of my office, over these many, many months.

And it all boils down to one of three options, when I begin to ask them about in terms of how are you going to find this person? Now if you know what you're looking for, where are you going to find them and how are you going to get them? Do you have a strategy involved? Usually it's one of three strategies that I hear. First of all, they'll say, "I'm going to leave it all up to God. I am just going to walk around, and almost oblivious to this issue, and I'm going to turn the corner and wham, I'm going to come face to face with the perfect guy, because God will have just somehow dropped him from the clouds." And there are some people like that, that are just going to leave it completely up to God. So, for you guys, it doesn't matter if you shave, or change your shirt once a year or not, because it's all up to God anyway, you have nothing to do with it. Well that is one approach. Sort of a mystical approach. Then there's the other side, or it's really sort of the opposite side of the equation who says, "It's all up to me." And there's this frantic search that they need to find this person. Now we really come across this around spring break.

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

Between spring break and the end of the school year, particularly for seniors, when the senior panic sets in. Because some of them get this feeling that, "I'm going to leave here, my parents sent me here to get this spouse, and what am I going to do if I go home without them?"

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

I'm going to get a degree, but I don't have maybe the greater thing, which is what they spent all this money to help me find!" And there's a certain pressure and expectation, so, the search is on,

like an Indiana Jones sequel. And then there's this other side of the equation that I've heard a lot in the last couple of years, the sort of this, uh, "I'm going to let someone else choose for me." Now that someone else, when I ask them questions, is usually mom or dad. And I'm thinking, okay, did mom and dad go to class for this? Do they live in the dorm with you? If mom and dad are back home in Kansas, how are they going to help you find that person on the Biola campus? You know, there's that mindset that says, "I'm going to leave it all up to my parents, because they know me best." You know, the Joshua heroes, the kiss dating goodbye kind of mentality. And that is a very popular approach. So it's one of those three options. And we are going to be talking about some of those options, some of the fallacies, some of the realities, of those particular choices, maybe I should say advantages or disadvantages of each of those, today and a little bit tomorrow as well. But uh, see I used to be a singles pastor, and over the years that I've pastored single adults, what they were was those who had already graduated college, or those who were still in college. They still are looking for God's perfect mate. And the issue comes down to, "How do I find them?" And the answer is usually, through dating, which leads to courtship, which then leads to marriage. So that's what this seminar is all about, and that's the direction we are going to take over the next couple of days.

Michelle Anthony:

Well actually it's-it's about developing a story that you're going to be telling down through the years to people. I don't know how many of you have grandpas, or grandmas, or, or aunts and uncles that love to just sit around and tell their stories. And, I think as I've grown older I've grown to appreciate the stories a little bit more than I did when I was younger. But recently, my parents just had their 40th wedding anniversary and we were putting together some pictures, and

wanted to do one of those video things, and ki-so we kind of said, "Hey let's just grab some pictures, maybe, you know, 50 to 100 pictures that kind of depicts their life, of when they met, they actually came here to Biola together as students, and dated along these years during their college years, and then got married and had their, have their story. So my--we kind of handed it back over to my parents and said, "We are going to go ahead and do this for you, you go ahead and pick your 50 to 100 pictures." Well this became such a crises in my mom's life, because she couldn't possibly tell her story in 50 to a 100 pictures, and when we were all done with this, thousands of dollars later, and 450 pictures later--

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

And the guy that I got to edit this, you know, is pulling out all of his hair, we finally got to the place where we could tell my mom's story, and I sat down with my parents just about a month ago at their house. This was a very sacred event. I was-I was propped up on the couch, Michael, knowing my mom, can totally understand. I was propped up on the couch, I was told exactly where to sit, not to speak, I couldn't comment, if I had anything to say I was supposed to remember those things and comment about them later. But we sat down, and this video montage was an hour and ten minutes long. And this told their story. So stories can be very sacred. And when it's your story, it's even more sacred. And this is the time when you're going to be thinking about those things that are going to contribute to what your story will be. And you know, we were watching a movie recently, When Harry Met Sally--Sally, and different people come on--

Michael Anthony:

Sallory?

Michelle Anthony:

Sally!

Michael Anthony:

When Harry Met Celery?

Michelle Anthony:

Yeah!

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

Harry.

Michael Anthony:

Veggie Tales?

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

Yeah. And, and, different people tell their story in this. And so, here's one of those. Here's one of those stories.

[Silence]

[Movie clip plays]

Michelle Anthony:

Just a little set up thing.

[movie clip plays]

[Audio cuts out]

[Movie clip continues playing and audience laughs throughout]

Michelle Anthony:

Well you know what? No one sets out to--no one sets out to have an unhappy ending to their story. And, although Michael and I haven't been married 50 years yet, although maybe some days it feels that way.

[Michael Anthony laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

We, we uh, we've been married almost 15, and, we have our own story. And we thought that it might be fun to start with our own story, and kind of walk you through that. Now, it's not a perfect story, and I won't take 450 pictures to tell it, or even an hour and 10 minutes to tell it, but it is our story. And it kind of shapes some of the things we did well, that we would pass down along to people who are interested, and the things we didn't do well, that we hope that maybe our children, or other people who hear them, will be able to learn from that. And so, uh, we'll just start by telling our story, and then we're going to walk you through some of those things. And

then tomorrow, we're going to try to make some sense out of how you can apply some of these things to your story. We are actually going to give you a chance today to write down some questions on some 3 by 5 cards, we're going to take them home tonight and try to assimilate those into answering some of your specific questions that might pertain to your story.

Michael Anthony:

Now, take into consideration the context of-when this is occurring. This is back in the, about the middle 80's. Okay, this is back a few years--

[Audience and Michael Anthony laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

Yeah.

Michael Anthony:

When hairstyles were very different, when values were different, and Biola was a very different place as well. Now, some of you have come to Biola when you can dance, and you can do other things that we couldn't even dream about as students. When I came to Biola as a student in the 70's, as Ron Hafer knows, boy, there was a really different culture around here then. I went to Talbot and it was a requirement that you had to come with a tie on, to class. And you had to have hair or skin over your ears. I graduated with a pony tail and the dean, when he put the hood over my head, nearly used it as a noose because I had avoided the dean all year long to see how long I could grow my hair, this was at a time back when, you know, you had to have skin over your hair. So in the 80's, we had come a little ways, but not a lot of ways. So when I came to Talbot to

teach, I was thirty years of age, I had my doctorate, I came in to teach as a, as a seminary professor at the age of 30. Now I was definitely the youngest guy around in Talbot. I remember walking into our first faculty meeting and looking around and seeing all this grey hair! I thought, "Look at all these grandfathers around here, this is amazing!" And I feel like-I felt like such a young kid at 30. Now, I used to be a youth pastor, so my lifestyle was always kind of young, and somewhat immature, shall I say, uh, and so, I was a young 30 at heart, as well as looking young. And so, when I came to campus, I was very self-conscious about the fact that my students didn't look that much different than me because I was so young in my appearance. And I dressed kind of casual and young, and so I had to try to do things to almost present an image that I was a little bit more mature than I actually was.

So I was really careful about being around women on campus, especially undergraduate women. And so, when they came to my office for academic advising, I had the door open, I had the microphone on, it was just a sense of-I was paranoid of what people would think if they walked down the office, down the hallway, and they saw me in my office with this undergraduate female student. So I was really careful about that. One day, I was in the Christian ed office, getting started at the beginning of the semester. And this girl walked in and she said, "I'm looking for Dr. Anthony." And I said uh, "Well that's me, what can I do for you?" And she looked up and she said, "Well, I'm here to drop your class." And I said, "Well how can you drop my class? You haven't ever taken it before. If you haven't taken it--you haven't even been there yet! What are you dropping my class for?" And she goes, "Well, I heard it was really a great class, I had this friend of mine who said it was life-changing." I said, "Yeah, okay, keep going." And she said, "But, I'm real-I'm a comm major, and I really, I kind of got swept into wanting to take this class

last Spring when he was telling me about all the field trips you took to Mexico, and inner-city, and it just seemed like something I wanted to do, but-but now that I'm back on campus, you know, summer's over, I-I want to go back to comm." And I said, "Well that's fine, no problem, I'll sign your card for--you're missing out on some fun stuff, but--" I signed her drop slip, and she walked out of the office. That was Michelle. The next day, I walk into that class. And there she is, sitting in the second row, third seat from the end!

[Michael Anthony laughs]

Michael Anthony:

But who's remembering?

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

So she's sitting in the class. I go through the whole presentation of what the class is all about, and I am pumped, I mean I am spinning and sweating, and I'm just so passionate about this class and about this major. It's life-transforming! You need to know what this is about, no matter what you do in life! What we talk about in Christian Ed is going to change your worldview, and this is what you need to be aware of. Well, at the end of that class, she left, and the next day she came back!

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

And then the next day she ca-- and I asked her, I said, "Didn't I sign your drop slip?" And she says, "Well yeah, but I-I kind of decided I think I'm going to go ahead and go through with the class after all." I said, "Interesting. Veryyy interesting." So I didn't push the matter, I didn't force her to turn in her drop slip, but the rest of that semester was just, you know, the professorial-student relationship that I have with all of the students, in terms of just getting them impassioned about ministry. After Christmas break, she comes by my office and she hears that I'm planning a Spring break missions trip to Haiti. And every spring break, that's what I like to do. And so let-- I'll let her kind of pick up where I left off there.

Michelle Anthony:

Well, but you're leaving out so much!

[Audience and Michael Anthony laugh]

Michael Anthony:

Yeah, details, details.

Michelle Anthony:

See, I do need my 450 pictures. Well anyway, we'll pick up there. You know, I, there is the part where we said, where we go out and make it happen ourselves, or we allow God to do it, and this was clearly an act of God, to--I actually wanted to drop that class. As cute as he was, I wanted to drop that class.

Michael Anthony:

Was. Did you get that operative word "was?"

[Audience and Michelle Anthony laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

No no no, is!

Michael Anthony:

Did you catch that? "Is?" not is, was!

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

But, when I went to go fill that spot, you know, I think back at the time, it was like a Tuesday Thursday at 10:30 or something, it was just a spot you didn't want to have a blank. There was absolutely not a class to be had here on the campus that was going to fit what I needed. So I showed back up at the class, and I-I'm thinking, "Okay, you know, I'll give it a try." And, that class actually, God used that class to transform my life that semester here at Biola, I was a communications major, and I wanted to do something really significant in communications, and even for the Lord and for ministry. But He grabbed my heart that semester, and I ended up changing my-my major to Christian Education, and now, working in a church as a pastor for children and student ministries, and loving it! And I'm seeing how God used that, that class and this person to start that. And, and when he started teaching and talking through this class, he was as life-transforming as my friend the semester before had said he was. And one of the things that was really big for Michael during those years, and even still is, is getting students out of the

Orange County area and onto the mission field. Well, I was 19 years old at the time, I had never been out of the state of California. Isn't that bad? That's terrible looking back and thinking, "I have got to get out of here, I have got to broaden my worldview." And so, I called my parents and I said, "You know what, can you help me raise some of this money because I'd like to go to Haiti." You know, going from never being out of the state of California to Haiti.

And, at that time, there was a lot of turmoil going on in Haiti, and we were going to go do some famine relief. And I just thought, this is a fantastic opportunity, and Michael was having such a tremendous impact in my life, in my spiritual growth at that time. I said "I have to be on the team!" And by the end of the day I think I left that check on your desk, I said, "I want to go, make sure there's a spot for me." And, we got to Haiti, and the more I'm listening to him, the more we're, we're feeding hungry people. There were children that were being set out on the streets to die because parents couldn't take care of them. I went through this radical transformation of having my heart ripped out, having not ever seen or even heard of things as awful as I was seeing them. And, and I am looking to my leader who's-my team leader, and Michael, and saying, you know, "How am I supposed to process this? What does this mean?" And there's so many conflicting emotions going on inside, and I'm starting to feel like I'm falling for my professor! This is not happening, you know. And I'm wrestling, and thinking, "Okay, that's just, that's just all the emotional stuff I'm going through." So, one day, one of our, one of our funny stories on this trip, was one day we are going for a swim, and there's a waterfall, and, all the guys in the group have gone through the waterfall, I mean, huge enormous waterfall where the pressure is going down. They're swimming down below the pressure point of the water and coming up on the other side, and we're hearing them scream through like, "It's so cool! come

through the waterfall!" And so, you know, we are trying to make attempts, but we can't get deep enough to go underneath, and the water pressure keeps popping us back up. So we get these logs, and we are trying to like shove people through on logs, and all sorts of stuff.

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

And, I'm like so determined, I'm completely determined to get over to the other side and see what this is. So other people have given up, and I think, okay, you know what I'm going to do? I'm just going to, I'm going to just swim through, with like, enormous strength, and I'm just going to go straight through it. None of this going down stuff, none of this log stuff, I'm just going to go through it. And my sheer will will get me through to the other side.

[Microphone pops]

Michelle Anthony:

Is that me? Okay. So, I get, I start swimming, I'm picking up speed, I'm going, I'm going, I'm going, and I go through the waterfall, and Michael sticks out his foot so I can grab his foot, but what I don't realize is that in my two piece bathing suit, with the waterfall pressure coming down--

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

As I go through, I lose completely the top of my bathing suit.

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

Note to self, wear a one-piece when going through a waterfall.

[Michelle and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

It was-it was--

Michelle Anthony:

So, the first thing I need--

Michael Anthony:

Quite the sight.

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Audience member:

Oh my gosh!

Michelle Anthony:

First thing I need on the other side. Yeah. So.

Michael Anthony:

Yeah! Isn't missions great?! I love missions!

[Audience and Michael Anthony laugh]

Michael Anthony:

Go on a short-term missions break and serve God!

Michelle Anthony:

But I'm not aware that this has happened, that's the worst part.

Michael Anthony:

I was!

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

So, he, he sticks out his foot--

Michael Anthony:

I'm the one taking notes now!

[Michael Anthony and Michelle Anthony laugh]

Michelle Anthony: He sticks out his leg so I can grab his leg, because he is just going to pull me through the rest of the way. And, as he sticks out his foot, I'm now realizing that my bathing suit top is down. So I'm pulling it up, which now his foot gets caught into my bathing suit.

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

It was just a terrible thing! And now the rest of the guys are sitting on the cliff watching this happen. And Michael was so classy, he never said a word, we both had that look in our eyes where we knew what had happened.

[Michael Anthony and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

But he never said a word. And so, later that night, we-we go for a walk, and I'm thinking he's going to talk to me about modesty, or, I don't know what he's going to do.

[Michael Anthony and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

And, he starts talking about some ministry opportunities at the church that he was at. And, I had an interest in high school ministry at the time, and, I'm thinking the timing of this was kind of funny, but I just decided to go with it anyways. So we start talking about a ministry opportunity that we're going to be working together that summer. And, I'm thinking, "Okay, he's feeling some of the stuff I'm feeling too," until, he ends our conversation with, "By the way, I just want you to know, that I don't date people that I work with." And so, I'm crushed, I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, he thinks I have a crush on him!" I'm so embarrassed. And so, the-the quickest, most court thing I could think of to respond to that was, "Why would you feel the need to say that?"

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

Keep going dear!

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

So, we had pretty much sealed the deal that this was just some emotional, topless fling--

[Michael Anthony and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

And, we're going to come back, and, I can work with this man, I have no feelings whatsoever, and I went back thinking, "That arrogant professor, that, oh, that duh duh duh." And, we get back, we get on the plane, we come home, just so happens that the person he was sitting with got the stomach flu and he just had to sit in the seat next to me. I don't know. And we ended up talking the whole way home, and I get back. And you have to understand, I come back a--I've been through this complete world-changing life experience on the mission field because I had never even been anywhere else. And I'm processing with my roommates, and instead of referring to him as Dr. Anthony, I start referring to him as Michael. And my roommates are going, "Michael? You mean Dr. Anthony." I'm like, "Oh yeah, yeah. Dr. Anthony!" And, just couldn't stop thinking about this amazing ministry experience we had had together. A few days later, Michael, Dr. Anthony, calls me, because Dr. Anthony was my supervisor, and he said, "You know what? I know you want to graduate early, we've got some stuff to do on that, and then I'd also like to show you the church where you're going to be working with the high school group. So why don't you come down and we'll do that." So I get to his office, and he says, "Let's go down, and we'll visit the church first." So we drive down to Irvine, which is where it was. Nope,

I kid you not, we walk up to the church, he goes, "Well, there's the church. Do you want to go to dinner?" And, so we ended up--

[Audience and Michelle Anthony laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

We ended up going to dinner that night, and, scandalous as it was.

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

This was uh, I wouldn't clap if I was you, this was uh, probably what? Middle of April. So we'd only been back about maybe 10 days. I had taken a position as an associate pastor of a church, who, when I arrived, the very day I arrived, he resigned and left. So now I'm interim senior pastor, the youth pastor had left as well, and I'm the only member on the pastoral staff, and I'm teaching full time at Talbot. So I need some help. I need some reinforcements. And since I know that Michelle can do youth ministry, having been interned at Calvary Church, uh, Santa Ana, under Kyle Castno, I knew that she would do a great job. So I stole her away, and asked her to come and run the youth ministry for my church. And so, it was important for her to get a proper orientation to the youth ministry. So I had her come and see the facility. And she saw the facility, and then of course we needed to talk some more. And so we went out to dinner. And while we're talking at dinner, I am getting more and more smitten with this incredible beauty. And so, she is eating her dinner and I bet I didn't take two bites of my meal, which is not normal for me, because most guys, you know, just like to shovel it in. I bet I had two bites of this dinner, because I'm looking at this, this angel sent from God, for me. Right there.

[Michelle Anthony laughs]

Michael Anthony:

I said, "What an incredible ministry resource she is!"

[Michelle Anthony and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

Thank You God for sending me this ministry resource, and this dinner is tax deductible! What more could you want! It's a, it's a ministry-it's a business expense!

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

That is so bad!

Michael Anthony:

So, we continued to meet from time to time, um, and every once in a while we talked about school stuff, but it was really starting to go the direction of dating. And from my point of view, I did not want to date an undergraduate student, for obvious reasons. You get this reputation of-of scamming on this recreational dating fling that really isn't the Talbot, professional model that we like to portray, to-with our faculty.

[Michelle Anthony and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

So, I knew I was really walking on-on more than thin ice, is-is an understatement. And so I just had to get to the end of the semester And once we got into summer, then there wouldn't be anyone around, and I'd be sort of free to-to develop this dating relationship.

[Michael Anthony sighs in relief]

Michael Anthony:

And that's what we did. we got through the Spring semester, we started to date throughout the summer, and I didn't want the whole church to make a big deal out of it. And so, we actually kind of went the opposite direction, in that when we were on church-uh church campus, we didn't talk to each other. In fact, it almost looked to most people like we were angry at each other because we didn't communicate that much because I wanted to be sure that they didn't think something was-- "Did you see that eye? Did you see that glance? Did you see the smile, the twinkle in his eye?" So I wanted to-to sort of downplay that, and so, once church was over, we'd meet at a restaurant together, we'd, you know, go to opposite parking lots, and drive out, and, but, lo and behold, Irvine wasn't that big of a city, and eventually people from my church started seeing us together. One day when we were sharing a cup of yogurt, what-the-with-the spooning yogurt to each other--

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

An-and-Misses Jones walked by and looked at us like "Oh my, Pastor Michael! And intern Michelle! What a coincidence!"

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

"What an interesting encounter!" and I knew the cat was out of the bag from that moment on.

Michelle Anthony:

Well, it wasn't the story that I had always grown up dreaming about, you know, we have a fourteen year age difference, he was my professor, now he's my boss, he's my, you know, department chairperson of my-of my ministry, of my degree here. And I, we had so many roles. And-and dating was really complicated for us. And, you know, looking back, that was the piece God chose for us. That was not the piece that either of us set out. I don't think Michael set out thinking, "Hey, when I'm graduating from high school, my wife is in kindergarten." You know, you just don't think of those things.

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

Yeah. It's a scary thought.

[Michael Anthony and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

But, but that was the piece that God had chosen for us. And it gets even more frightening now that our daughter is twelve, and we look and we go, you know, this is just a, you know, something that we don't pick that God picks for us. But, as our story went, we knew more and more, God confirmed more and more that we were supposed to be together. And we dated, we made that-we made that known when we came back in the Fall here, I was a Junior, I ended up

having to take classes from him as we were engaged, and then later as we were married. And those were difficult, it was difficult selling him to my parents at first, you know, when I--

Michael Anthony:

Well--

Michelle Anthony:

I say, "Mom, Dad, uh, I, yeah. Remember Dr. Anthony? Um..."

Michael Anthony:

"He's coming to dinner!"

Michelle Anthony:

Yeah! "He's coming to dinner." And, and just working through a lot of those complicating things. Now, he's a wonderful Christian man. He's a teacher at Biola, He's a pastor. These are all the things my parents would have wanted for me. But, it seems as if I had brought home, in fact, one day we were walking on the beach and I said, I said, "Michael, why don't we create some horrific story about who you are, and then by the time that I tell my parents 'no I'm just kidding, he's really just Michael,' then they're going to be so happy and accept you."

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

But, you know, it took them, it took them one minute, really, the minute that he come to the door, and after the grilling session that my father had with him, and Michael recovered from that, you know, that piece has gone on. but as we-as we tell our story, as we tell our story, these have become parts of who we are. Some things we wish we could have done different, some things we wish would have been different, but this is the one that God gave to us.

Michael Anthony:

We recently saw the movie "Meet the Parents."

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

And do you remember the scene where the, the father gets this potential son-in-law in his office downstairs, and straps him to the lie detector? That's not too far a feel from the experience I had.

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

Because when I came through the door, maybe, according to Michelle her mom and dad fell in love with me from the-in the first minute, but it sure didn't come across that way to me. Because I still had to go through the-the test with her father. Now her father is a very large man.

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

I mean in terms of-if-of just, his physical stature, he can be a very intimidating fellow. I mean he's what? 6' 200?

[Michelle Anthony laughs]

Michael Anthony:

He's just a big man. 6'3" 6'4". And-and I remember after dinner, it was after all the pleasantries got done, we sat down in the living room, and I'm rec-sitting across the living room with him, and he's asking me a few questions. Yeah, "What kind of car do you drive? How long you've been in school? What are your intentions with my daughter?" We just like-cut right to the chase. And at that point, I had been like, wow! where did that train come from? And Michelle is sitting next to him and she says, "Dad! Wait, yeah!"

[Michelle Anthony and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

"Let's hear this answer, I'm kind of curious too, let's DTR this thing, okay? Let's define this relationship, let's see where we're going!"

[Audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

"Yeah! let's hear this answer!" And so I've got to kind of play my cards with this guy, because if I don't, I'm a dead man! And I've got to let them know that my intentions are, that if God continues to give us peace and direction, that I would like to see us move towards marriage. And

so, at that point, we sort of played the cards out on the table and proceeded to work towards marriage. That in essence in a nutshell was our experience, that's our story.

Michelle Anthony:

We dated for about 9 months, and then were engaged for 6 months. So it was relatively quickly, it was relatively fast for a lot of the things that we really needed to work through. And I think as we worked through the things that we did right, and the things that we did wrong, or maybe not as well, had to do with, kind how quickly our timetable went. And a lot of that was out of our control in some ways. Michael was already 35 by the time we got married, and he kind of wanted to, you know, not wait five-the five to ten-year plan to date, and court, and-and then start having children after that. And so, my timetable as I got married when I was 21, so my timetable was rushed. And so, there were some things that I had to sacrifice, and decide if I wanted to sacrifice. But there-there was some things that we really took out of this. The first thing that I think was the most attractive in our dating and courtship time was that we fell in love with each other's hearts. I never set out to fall in love with a professor or my boss, or any of these other things, or even someone who was that much older than me. But I fell in love with his heart. And once I fell in love with his heart, so many of those other things didn't even matter. And so many of those other things weren't as compelling as I thought they would be. Remember when we talked about how, there are the people who set out to do it all themselves? I was kind of one of those people. I had-I had the journal, list of 40 things that I wanted in a guy. And it was like, you know, you kind of go out on your first date with a guy, and you're checking off, he's got 8 of the 40.

[Michelle Anthony makes a buzzer sound]

Michelle Anthony:

You know, or, oh, he's got 12!

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

And we would really do this, we would sit there. And I remember axing one guy, sorry, I-it was immature. I'd axed one guy because his shoes. I didn't like the way, you know, he put his shoes, the kind of shoes he chose. And then-and God just totally re-worked my mind and I fell in love with Michael's heart. And looking back, that's really the thing that is so important when-as you journey through life and we look-we are going to look at another couple here. These people, when you're planning to marry someone, my commitment to Michael was "Till death do us part," that's not a real popular thing in our society, but I was going to be with this man, maybe caretaking him through, you know, his grandmother lived to be over 100, so. You know, it kind of runs in the family, and I'm thinking, is this the person I want to spend the rest of my life with? His shoes are going to be different.

[Michael Anthony laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

His face is going to be different. You know, our bodies, our personalities change. Is this the heart of the person that I want to spend the rest of my life with. And I decided yes.

Michael Anthony:

Let's take another look at a clip of the story.

Michelle Anthony:

That's not what--your-you're fast-forwarding it. No you're fast forwarding it, honey.

[Audience laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

No no no, back it up. No no don't listen!

[Michael Anthony, Michelle Anthony, and audience laugh]

Michelle Anthony:

Okay, wait, wait.

Michael Anthony:

Excuse me, [unintelligible]

Michelle Anthony:

We are having technical difficulties.

[Silence]

Michael Anthony:

The counter on this is not on here.

Michelle Anthony:

I know, it's just that it was fast-forwarding.

[Video clip plays]

Michael Anthony:

I need to fast forward now, this is [unintelligible]

Michelle Anthony:

Seventeen thirty. Okay! Here we go. Watching it.

Michael Anthony:

Why Harry, why Sally.

[Michelle Anthony laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

Okay stop!

Michael Anthony:

Love that hair.

Michelle Anthony:

Stop!

[Video clip plays]

Michael Anthony:

Awww.

[Michelle Anthony and audience laughs]

Michael Anthony:

Coming out of our story was a very significant reality to me, that I had told God long ago that if I were to get married, I prayed for the gift of celibacy. I know most of you would never think of praying for that gift, but I prayed for that gift for many many years, until I met Michelle. Then I prayed, "God please don't give me that gift."

[Michelle Anthony and audience laugh]

Michael Anthony:

I changed my mind, you can have it back. But uh, I-I really wanted that gift for a lot of years, because I had a heart and a passion for serving God in ministry. Ministry was what I was born to do. And so, I had to be sure that if I found someone that I was going to connect with as a life partner, that it wasn't going to be someone that would hamstring my ability to do ministry. I needed to find someone whose heart also beat for ministry and for serving God. Now over the years, I had had many friends who had gone through seminary, or gone through Bible college, and they had gotten married, but the person that they married didn't have a heart for ministry the way they did. And so within a couple of years, the grind, and that's probably the best adjective for their relationship, the grind of doing ministry with a spouse whose heart wasn't as committed to doing it as they were, just finally brought a certain degree of, almost like inertia, that it-it had to come to an end. And so they quit doing ministry. He was out of ministry because she never

wanted it in the first place. Or she was okay with it, but once the reality of what it meant to be a pastor's wife set in, it's like, "Hey baby, I didn't bargain for this. No class prepared me for that." Or the other way around, where maybe the woman wanted to go into ministry, the guy was a business major, wanted a business, was okay with that, but pretty soon her being out doing ministry at night just didn't sit too well, especially when the children came along, and so the pressure was on her to bail on ministry. And just, too many people that we both knew had had that experience and I was determined after a PhD and all of these seminary degrees that I had gone through, that I finally got to a point where I was doing what I really really felt called to do, that I wasn't going to let an individual come along that was going to prevent me from doing that the rest of my life. So I wanted to be sure that we were compatible in ministry together. That was part of my reasoning for having her work with me at my church. Because if we couldn't do ministry together, her as a youth pastor and me as the associate pastor, then there was no future even bothering to consider marriage. Because if we were going to get married, we were going to go the long run being compatible in ministry together.

Michelle Anthony:

Well what he doesn't tell you is that I was kind of on this informal interview to know if I could, if he felt he could do ministry with me. And so, right after we had gotten back from Haiti, as if that wasn't enough, we-he asks me out and he said, "I want you to dress casually, just wear like jeans and a sweatshirt, I'm going to pick you up here at the Biola campus, and we're going to go out. Would you like to do that?" And I said, "Yeah!" And I'm thinking, "Alright, we're going. This will be like a real date, because so far we've just gone and talked about the church and don't things like that." So he picks me up, and we start driving, we are driving for a very long time.

Now we are crossing over the border into Mexico, and as we cross into the border of Mexico, he says, "There's this church that I-I like to work with on this bible study that's on Thursday nights and I thought I'd bring you down here to see what it's all about." And I was like, "Oh, okay, yeah great!" So here we are, we're swept into this thing, and I-I fell in love with him even more that night to tell you the truth, actually. Because as I walked in, there were people who knew him that had loved him, that he had an impact on their life, and just to see the kind of things that he chose to do with his evenings. Well, unbeknownst to me, I'm thinking, "I'm just going to kind of stand in the back, and observe, and be a part of this." But he had different plans for me. So, when all of the children congregate down below in sort of the basement for the children's section, he volunteers me to teach through an interpreter for all the children here that night. And it's sort of like, I'm on. 40:37 And, so, here's all the kids, he's like, "Oh, you'll be great, you'll be fantastic! This will be wonderful!" So, I get up in front of everybody, I'm telling stories, I'm doing my thing, and he's in the back smiling and thinking, "Okay, I can marry this woman." And I'm thinking, "I cannot marry this man!"

[Audience and Michelle Anthony laughs]

Michelle Anthony:

There's all these, what is he doing? This is his idea of a date. But, I learned to understand that this was a really important thing for Michael, and I love the way that he said that he had said that he wasn't going to marry someone unless he was convinced that he could be better in ministry than if he hadn't married that person. And I started adopting that. We didn't know at that time if we were the ones that God had had for each other, but I adopted that, that I wasn't going to get

married unless that that would, that would accentuate the ministry that I was going to be able to have.

Michael Anthony:

In the last couple minutes that we have remaining, what we're really doing is we want through these two days is first of all to share our story, and then sharing some principles about love, dating, and courtship that come from our own experience. We've jotted down about 5,6,7 lessons that we are learning that we want to share with you. And obviously that comes from our own experience. It comes out of our own story as we share that with you. Now we've see-we shared some of the good stories so far from our life. We're kind of taken the safe road. Tomorrow we are going to take some of the more vulnerable moments and we are going to be open and honest about some of these things that haven't gone so well. But these are the good things. Some of the things we are going to share about tomorrow, some of the aspects of our relationship in-in both courtship and in dating-or in marriage that were an absolute disaster for us. And we wish looking back during our dating and courtship seasons that we'd asked some different questions, or we'd snooped around in some different areas, we'd have the opportunity to look into some things that in hindsight mattered a whole lot more than we thought they would. And we are going to be sharing about those tomorrow. Now in preparation for that, we are going to pass out some cards. And if you've got some very specific questions or issues that you want us to deal with, then we want you to write those down and when you leave, put them up here on the front stage. Now obviously these are anonymous, we will be open and honest with you about any of the issues you've got in terms of our own relationship or other relationship issues or ones that you're going

through. So we're going to--um Ron would you hand out these cards for us please, and there's some pencils here as well. And, just as he's doing that, we are going to show this next clip.

[Video clip plays]

Michael Anthony:

Well who knows, maybe that will be your story as well, as you sneak around and try to check out that girl in that class. Let's have a word of prayer together as we wrap up. Father thank You, thank You for Your hand upon us in this very important season of our lives. Lord You've designed interpersonal relationships. This is the way that You've created us to relate to one another. Father I pray that You would give us wisdom and insight into how we navigate this important season of our life. Love is a very present condition and reality of our campus, and dating is something that is on our mind constantly. And for some they're in the process of courtship. I pray Lord that You uh, that this seminar both today and especially tomorrow would be something that would be so beneficial as we have an opportunity to see the way that You've designed it to be. I pray that You would help these students as they have the opportunity over Torrey conference to put aside some of their studies, to reflect upon some other issues in life, this is surely one of the very biggest issues of our life, who our spouse will be. That Your hand of blessing and provision will be upon us and that Your Holy Spirit would guide in this time. We give You thanks and I pray in Jesus' name, amen. So in the five minutes that we have if you would jot down a question or an issues that you would like us to address, and then when you leave if you would out it up on the stage, we'll pick that up tomorrow as we continue sharing the ongoing drama and saga of our relationship. God bless you, thanks for coming.