

Before You Say I Do: Session 2

By Mark Lee

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Because we never have enough time. If you, if you meet the question, simply lift your hand.

Some of you, I see, forgot the method yesterday and it will cost you an extra \$14. I don't know who you pay, but make sure that it's tied. If you have your questions before you, those of you have asked these are dealt with in oh, I'm sorry. That's right, Coach, thanks. I realize this being taped for posterity. Those of you who ask about it, I have taken the 50 questions and they appear in this book, How to have a Good Marriage. I think there are 44 copies over in the bookstore, and on Friday there will be a 45th one, this one on Friday, if you're interested. Now you have the questions before you 50 of them, and we need all the time we can get, so we'll move along.

However, I liked what happened yesterday in that a number of people asked questions in the course of what we are doing, and that's important. It's important also because it helps me to see right where we are. And I'm not talking about some other generation or some other circumstance. My wife with me this morning. She would have been here yesterday morning, but we got in about 03:00 A.m. From Canada and as a result she was resting up.

But if you have a question that relates in some way to her thought processes, I hope you'll ask them and she'll be glad to come up and respond to them. I always like it when people ask her how she gets on after all these years with living with such a great guy and some of her answers are improper, but nevertheless, you may certainly ask them quickly. Let's run through the first few questions. We only touch on a few. We'll speed up as we go along.

Number one, how extensively you talked about the issues which arise after marriage. Generally, we discover that they have not discussed them in any depth they think they have until we begin some testing and we begin some question asking ourselves and then they realize how little they've done. I use two great passages of Scripture as bases for the discussions. One is Matthew 19, which covers, of course, the views of Jesus relative to marriage. The other one is Ephesians Five, which gives us the doctrine of marriage. And marriage is indeed a doctrine. It is a doctrine that relates to the Church and to Christ. And you need to understand that in Ephesians Five.

Number two, I ask what books they have read, and in many instances, the books are not really substantive. In some ways, they're attractive, they are well written. They are usually written by popular authors, but in many instances they have not really dealt with the real issues. Another problem that we usually face in this and my next book is going to have two bibliographies in it in an attempt to break Christian people out of reading only Christian literature.

For example, the very best book I've ever read on rearing children is not Christian. It is not Christian. Effective parents, responsible children. It's McMillan. Let's see, the author slipped me Atchison and Eilers or Eilers and Atchison. Immers and Atchison. Writers Atchison and Immers. You'll find it. Mcmillan is the publisher, as I recall, and so on. I could keep going with that. But in a book that's going to be coming out, which is 13 Studies on the Family, primarily designed as a substitute for general Sunday school lessons in which they can take a quarter, three months, 13 lessons, I'm going to give two bibliographies in an attempt to get Christians often who get stuck on just Christian literature to recognize that there are some good, solid things that are available to us outside of our own publishers.

And instead, in fact, some of the stuff we've got from our publishers is junk. I mean, it's just good Christian junk. So we need to take a look at that. Number three. Are you Christians? This

becomes terribly important, especially to a Christian counselor, because if they are not, it's going to take this direction. I admit my prejudice. I've got a prejudice. As far as I know, there's only one prejudice that is clear to me. I'm sure there's some secret ones that are not clear to me, but it's very clear that my prejudice is Christianity. I try to be as objective as I can, but I'm sure in many things I'm not so terribly objective. And so when persons who are not Christians talk to me, I say, I'm not sure you want to talk to me, because I already believe that much of what I will propose to you will not work if Christ is not in your life. You see, I think the solution for a nonchristian is oftentimes not a solution for a Christian because of the differences in which they function. And so I want to know that so that I can do my best for them.

Yes, I'll talk about that a little bit later. That's going to come up a little bit later. The question was that yesterday I talked about two Christians who are committed to each other, but there are different levels of maturity. You see, unequally yoked together may actually be an unequal yoke in relationship to your Christian maturity.

For example, here is a person who is deeply committed to all that Christ would have for them, even including Ministry. The other person wants Christ and their life. All right. Church all right. Even one of our children went through one of these times and he says, Why can't I just go to Church anonymously? Now, what he meant by that was he didn't want to bother to sing in the choir. He didn't want to bother to teach Sunday school class. He wanted to be a Christian, but he wanted to be as nearly as possible out on the edge. He wanted to be inside because it's better to get to heaven, even by the fire escape, than to go to hell by the broadest kind of road. And he wanted to be a Christian, all right, but he didn't want it to cost too much.

Now, a person like that while he was going through that, in fact, now he's done a toopsy turvy where I have to be careful. He doesn't just pour religiosity over everything. You know, people

who are dirty, don't pray about it, go take a bath. That'll help more than prayer. The point is that a lot of people will twist it one way or another. And you can be sure of this, that your marriage in many instances are going to be happy or unhappy, not because you are both, because one of you is not a Christian on is, but because one sees himself herself surrender to what God would achieve in life. And the other one is just taking it as another part, another chapter in their lives, rather than it covers all of their lives.

So that I find an enormous number of problems in Christian homes simply because one wants to live all out and the other one does not. I had such a couple, by the way, not too long ago, and she wanted to tie then he didn't. And this had led to an enormous amount of difficulty. So I questioned him about it, and he says, I put a dollar in every Sunday. And he says, I just made a will and left \$100 to my Church. Big deal. He honestly thought that he had done something worthwhile, and she had proposed that she get a job. And then he permit her to tithe for both his salary and hers. And he says, she's trying to make me feel guilty. And I said, sure she is. And he says, well what do you mean by that? I said, because you're guilty.

We just might as well face it. He says, well, what do you think about it? I said, well, I just think that's a marvelous solution. If you're unwilling to tie, then she feels that much commitment and she's willing to do a double duty and cover it because that comforts her. And if you feel guilty because you think that's judge mentalism. I says, I don't detect it. She just wants to be a part of a family that ties their income. Well, we talked a great deal and we become friends. He works for the PG and E in San Francisco, and he makes a fine salary. And just think big deal. He gives a dollar every Sunday. I don't think he's ever changed it, but at least he permitted her to work and give more than would have otherwise been the case.

Number four, is there any impediment in the marriage? And I talked to you about that yesterday. There are all kinds of problems, and sometimes these problems will not surface before marriage. They surface afterwards. And when they surface afterwards, you're in difficulty. One of the reasons why you're in difficulty is that the person you marry will say, she didn't trust me. He didn't trust me before marriage. Now we're married and stuck. Now they tell me, or now I find out. And the whole argument is that there's been some distrust all the way along the line. If before the marriage you cannot put before this individual the kind of problem you're going to face. And those problems are sometimes so exotic, so extensive as to be almost impossible to understand.

I was speaking in Mount Herman in the Santa Cruz Mountains. And this couple, were having all kinds of difficulty. And finally, in talking to them, they said, well, we need to talk to you alone somewhere where we can't be overheard. We were standing in a group. I said, Fine. So we went over to the youth Chapel and sat down. And she started in. And she didn't want to reveal really her feelings at the moment. But as they were going along, it became obvious that she was very suspicious of her husband's motives, especially in relationship to their daughter. She thought that there might be some kind of incestuous relationship between her husband and their daughter. Well, of course, when that kind of accusation begins, I must hear the evidence. And I said, no, what evidence do you have? What kind of gestures are you making? What does he do in relationship to the daughter? Well, as I pursued it, it was obvious that it was in her mind. It was not in anything he was doing. And then I asked him straightforwardly, have you ever had any kind of sensual thought toward your daughter? He said, no, I have not. But I can't convince her of this. And I said, well, now there's got to be a reason for this. Well, then she started and she said, well, my father violated me when I was the age of my daughter.

In other words, the father had entered into an incestuous relationship with his daughter, who is now the wife sitting before me of this man. And so I said, you mean to say that you're forcing on your husband an experience that happened to you when you were a teenager? And she says, Well, I guess that's right. Well, I asked her husband if he knew about this before they were married. He said, no, I did not. She wouldn't discuss it for years. But now it's come out that our daughter is the age that she was when she went through that experience with her father. Now she thinks, I'm going to do what her father did.

And I still couldn't get a handle on it because everything that we dealt with and all of the solutions were of such a nature that she ought to have been relieved. But she wasn't. And then it hit me. What happened was I said, hey, you feel guilty, don't you? I said to her, she says, what about? I said to the relationship with your father? She said, yes. I says, Why are you guilty? He's the one that initiated it with you. Well, they tell me that when you have something like that happen, I must have done something to have stimulated the initiation of the acts. I said, no, that's not necessarily true. And then I kept digging until I found out what really happened was that she enjoyed the relationship with her father. And as a result of her enjoying the relationship with her father, she actually thought that that would occur again with her husband, her daughter. And until she faced that got it out of her spirit, she could not trust her husband.

And by the way. It becomes as complicated as that. And without a counselor in on that, they would have never found out why it was that the mother still insisted on the problem. By the way, this goes on and on and on. It goes on. One of the most common problems, if not the most common problem that I face with people is that they've had premarital sex and especially when she gets pregnant, when she gets pregnant. And so now she's pregnant, she marries the father of the child. Everything is fine, and it goes fine for years.

Now the daughter is 15, 16, 17 years of age that may have been born of this relationship. And now the mother is having an awful time. She's repulsed by her husband. They come to see me and they sit there and talk and I say, hey, what's the problem? And they recite it. And I said, no, wait a minute. You've been married 15, 16, 17, 18 years, whatever it is. And now you're coming back in her case and blaming her husband for what happened. And you realize that there's a tremendous sense of guilt, even though they thought they handled it 15 years ago, twelve years ago, whatever it is, they think that they've handled it. Now it comes in full circle because they see one of their children their age when they did it.

And now they think God is going to get even with me by letting my daughter go through the same experience. And now she feels repulsed by her husband. It's amazing how many persons are pregnant in the American society. I don't know how it is in another society, but in the American society, if you're pregnant at the time of the wedding, you can be likely sure of this. That 15 years hence, you're still going to have to deal with that issue because it's going to come back. It's going to seem to leave and you're going to have a happy time. You're going to know that God's forgiven you and that all things are put together. But the consequences of our acts just seem to live on and on and on with us. And we need to understand that it's not that God hasn't forgiven us and wiped the sleep clean. But we still live with those consequences.

If I eat the wrong diet, God may forgive me for it, but I'll still have a bad stomach till the day I die. We live with the consequences of what we do. It's there. It's something like what Dennis Guernsey said this morning, that you still have it in your head, in your heart and your gut, and you're going to have to live with the consequences of what you do. Be mature enough to know how to treat that and how to handle that in the process. I'm going to move on unless you have questions.

Sometimes the problems become so exotic that unless you have some real pro to come into your life and handle it. This woman sat in the room because she had told her husband not until after they were married. She told her husband that she could never stay married to him. She was a Christian living in Modesto, California. He was a Christian, and they belong to a very fine evangelical Church. And she said that if he ever got a terrible disease by terrible disease, one that couldn't relatively easily be cured, that she couldn't live with him anymore. Now, she didn't tell him that until several years after they were married. She had this whole thing in her mind, and she was sitting there talking to me, and I said something to her.

I said, Maybe I won't be able to help you. And she says, what do you mean? I says, well, my wife has lived with me, and I had cancer, and I was operated for cancer. They tell me I'm cured now, but there looked like no hope for maybe five years. And she was immediately repulsed by me. And I said, well, now I may not be able to help you. She says, I don't suppose you can. I said, what? She says, all I can think of is that I'm breathing the same air that you're breathing. She's going to have a little trouble with her marriage. And by the way, my heart went out in enormous compassion to this poor woman, you see, because I didn't have to go through what she's got to go through. But she was absolutely repulsed by anybody that had a disease of that nature. To think she says that I'm in the same room breathing the same air that you're breathing. I said, do you wish to cut it off and go outside? She says, yes, I do. And I said, let's do that. She says, no, I can't. I said, Why not?

I've got to get over it. I said, you're 45 years old, and you haven't gotten over it yet. What makes you think you can get over it today with me sitting here? She didn't get over it. And you've got these kinds of things to face, and you better get them out before the marriage for your good and for theirs. There's so much that I can cover there. If you have no question, we'll move on.

Question number five. Question number five, do you understand Christian marriage? Now, Christian marriage is so totally different than most everything that I hear said. Christian marriage is based on the concept of service not being served so much as serving the other. It's based on service, it's based on headship. If you're convinced that the equality of the sexes, which by the way, I fully believe in. It's taught in the Scriptures, start with Galatians 3:28, if you doubt it, I believe totally in the equality of the sexes. But the moment that you establish a marriage and if it's a Christian marriage, it has a role to be played. And the role of the one is to be the Jesus figure, the Christ figure in the home, and the role of the other is to be the Church figure in the home and the Church figure is the female figure and the Christ figure is the male figure.

In some other Eon of some other time it can be reversed. That's just fine and dandy, but this is not the way God has done it for us. And you ought to master Ephesians five if you want to understand what Christian marriage is. Now, my wife and I, I think are good illustrations of the point. We were married, two Christians who were married, on September 18, 1943, and for the next 13 and a half years these two Christians lived together, but they did not have Christian marriage.

They had a marriage and it was a marriage that was kept and we had all of our children born during that period. But we didn't have Christian marriage because I did not really understand what it is to be the Christ figure in the home. My wife didn't really understand what it is to be the Church figure in the home. And as Christ serves the Church, I served my wife and children. And as the Church gives respect to Christ, so the wife and children give respect to their husband in that sense and father. And for the most part I have not heard people respond with an understanding of Christian marriage.

To find out, one time I took my place at the door and asked people as they go out, Would you give me a quick definition of Christian marriage? And I didn't get a single one though it was an evangelical Church with 1000 people in it. So I decided to try somewhere else because maybe that was an aberration of that Church. And I asked that the next Church, not a single one of them, gave me a definition of Christian marriage. Most of the definitions were beautiful, intimate relationship of Fidelity, relationship thus and so and all of these kinds of social understandings, but the understanding of what a Christian marriage really is where he is the Christ figure in the home.

And by the way we twist almost everything else, too. You see, instead of submission, we talk about subjugation. I hope you, dear ladies, do not turn submission into subjugation. And if the man subjugates his wife, he's not acting in a Christ like way because Christ did not subjugate people. Submission is quite a different thing from subjugation. And you need to start with verse 21 in Ephesians Five to begin to understand what that's all about. So you need to understand what Christian marriage really is, and you'll understand that by studying carefully and accepting the latter part of Ephesians five. Now there's a great deal more to be said there, but I'll let it go by unless you challenge me, raise questions or give a turn that we need to understand.

All right. You need to understand what Christian marriage is. You've got to decide whether or not you want Christian marriage. Is that what you want? For the first 13 and a half years of more than 37 years that I've been married, we were two Christians who were married from April of 1957 to the present time. We are two persons married in a Christian marriage. In other words, we decided in the kitchen of our home that we are going to accept Christian marriage and live it out for the rest of our lives.

We are the same two people, but we have quite a different marriage from April of 57 than we did from September to April, September 43 to April of 57th. And I think you're going to have to decide that and get that clear in your minds. Most Christians I talk to do not understand what it is. If you know anything about the history of the Church and the history of marriage, you will know, for example, that the old Puritans came over to them was the west, but the Eastern seaboard of what we now call the United States. And when they got married, they were reminded by the Ministry that they were establishing the ekklesia, the little Church.

In other words, the family is the little Church, the ekklesia, and the father takes the Christ figure, the mother takes the Church figure. The children are the converts, so to speak. You even feed them the same way spiritually as you do physically. You give them the milk, and when they are strong enough, you give them the meat of the word. This is the whole concept of the New Testament. No wonder we call the family the basic institution of all other institutions, including the Church in our society.

In other words, if you want a Christian marriage, you're going to establish the ekklesia, the little Church in your home where you have the Christ figure, the Church figure, the husband, the bride of Christ together in that home.

Number six. What are your temperaments now? Most of the time when people talk about temperament in the Christian society, they immediately think of Tim, Lehi and the temperaments caliche, sanguine, melancholy and phlegmatic. Now this grows out of an ancient concept of the Romans in which there were humors. And by humor they meant juices. You had certain juices in the body. You had bile, and bile was representative of a certain kind of attitude. So they developed the four humors. This has been picked up in our time, and Christianized, even though it was a pagan idea originally, has been Christianized.

And by the way. I have no problem with that. I'm not trying to in any way depreciate it because there's enough in the scripture to stimulate that perception, and there's enough in real life to stimulate that perception. But you're not going to find out enough with that perception about yourself. Therefore, at this point, everyone that counsels with me must take the Taylor Johnson temper analysis test. And by the way. It's worth taking, even if you're not thinking about marriage.

In there you have nine categories. These nine categories tell you something about where you are, where you are, whether or not at four different kinds of divisions from doing very well to need assistance immediately in regards to correcting those issues. So I have the couple take them. I take a look at separate profiles. I take a look at the profile of one imposed upon the other so that they can see what is similar in their lives and what is dissimilar. We've learned something, and that is this, that before your marriage, before you marry, opposites attract after you marry, opposites tend to turn you away.

There's something about liking a person that's different than we are before we're married. After we're married, we don't like it, that they are different. For some reason this is the way we are. And I have worked through an enormous number of persons who beforehand they have more dividing traits than you can imagine. And then afterwards and by the way, those dividing traits make the other person look terribly attractive. You may have been brought up in a very conservative Christian home where there's been enormous limitation relative to the kinds of entertainment you have, et cetera.

Now you meet this kind of free flowing, easygoing person who also is a Christian, but he doesn't find quite so many limitations in his life. And you find this rather attractive. There's no getting around it. That that's going to create some problem later on. Either you're going to adopt that

lifestyle and respond to it, or you're going to find it exceedingly objectionable later on. It's one of the things that we cannot fully explain, and that is that opposites attract and later opposites repel. And you need to take a sharp look at that later on. Mutuality is going to become exceedingly important to you. We call it, more than anything else, sharing.

But when you're at opposites, you're not going to share that much at first. You seem to be sharing with each other because you are going against the mutual enemy parents or the mutual enemy elders who hold to something else. And even though you may not have the bravery to go out and break it, you kind of like that somebody else is, and you're kind of going along because you think something's going to happen, but later on that's going to repel.

There's no question in my mind that most people do not understand that there are traits that will tend to strengthen us and traits that will tend to divide us. Now, if I add those up, I work with these people and I get these strong traits, I get these dividing traits. Then I subtract the dividing traits from the strengthening traits. And this is what people do when they predict the future success or failure of this particular marriage. And they are exceedingly successful, very successful. And by the way, I think you could do it.

Put down all of the traits that we share, all of the things that we tend to be divided on, and then subtract the dividing ones from the strengthening ones. And if you come out pretty well at the zero level, you're going to be in some difficulty. If the traits that unite you do not dominate the traits that divide you, you're going to be in doubt relative to the future. Remember also that a marriage ought to be repaired, like which I use an automobile would be repaired. But today we're living in times when if you have a flat tire, get rid of the whole car, buy a new car because you have a flat tire.

The same thing happens in the marriage. You'll have all kinds of things go wrong with it. Repair what's wrong. And this is one of the reasons why second marriages are highly unsuccessful.

Second marriages do not stay together as often as first marriages do. The reason why is that the reason why the first marriage broke. The reasons why the first marriage broke up are not dealt with when they come to the second marriage. So the second marriage breaks up more rapidly than the first one because they don't deal with the issues. And then the third one and the fourth one I have an uncle that lives in the Southwest, and he may be one of the ten most married persons in the country. I think he's been married 16 times.

It's appalling that a person who married 16 times couldn't find anyone to be happy with. You see, the problem is that that person has never dealt with the issues from the first marriage, has never dealt with the issues to straighten out the problem, and therefore simply dump it every time instead of repairing the part that's wrong. And we need to understand that. Number seven, why do you want to get married?

Well, they sit there and of course, I love this. I love my work. I sit there. Why do you want to get married? And because we love each other. Well, I assumed that or they wouldn't be there. And I said, I don't want to talk about that. I want to know why you want to get married. And so they go back over the various reasons why people want to get married because of their sex drive. One of the most common ones, 45% of all, people get married. Afterwards, when they're asked why they get married, they said because of the central drive within them. 45% that's nearly one in two.

That the reason why they get married. And by the way, Paul admits this. He admits it starting out in almost the first verse of first Corinthians Seven, that there's a strong physical drive. People are suspicious of it, guilty about it, but it's there. And it's one of the evidence that God gives us, that

we need someone else to fulfill our lives. There's no question about that. Another reason why is because of domestic urge. I want a home. I want a husband. I want a wife.

I want to have a home to come to that fulfills the dream of what a family is like. Or they'll say, I want companionship. Companionship is the number one thing that men ask for. Companionship. The number one thing that women ask for is love. The number two thing that men ask for is love. The number two thing women ask for is companionship. So companionship and love come very close together. The man wants companionship and love, and the woman wants love and companionship. All right with me, that's just fine. By the way, we've got it down statistics just like everything else. And the materials are available to you.

But this is what they say they got married for. Or they will commonly say that the reason why I want to get married is because of the urge to have children. Now that's a tremendous urge. All of these things fitted into our lives between my wife and me. And they're beautiful in the proper sense, if you keep them where they are. Someone generated my life. I want to generate other lives. I wanted to have children. I do not fully understand those who sit and say, well, we want to get married, but we don't want to have children.

By the way, I don't fully understand it, but I respect it and I don't put it down. I generally ask why. And if the answer to the why is selfishness, then they've got to deal with selfishness. The first person ever did this in my counselor was more than 30 years ago, my student Secretary. And she says, I want to get married, but I don't want to have any children. And I said, surely you've got to explain that to me. And so she said, well, then when she went through her story, it was obvious that her own childhood was so unhappy with a mother and father divided and ultimately divorced. And the kind of pressure she went through, especially with her mother, where everything that wore pants in those days, only men wore pants where everything that wore pants

was somehow wicked and awful and going to require too much of you as she found it difficult to make the adjustment.

And so I began to see that she didn't want children, not because she was selfish, but she didn't want children because she felt totally incapable of meeting their needs, of relating to them. And then she said to me, now, what shall I do about it? And I said, you better find so that you can solve the problems of your life, a relationship with the children of others, which indeed she did. She married a fellow who was exactly like her. But it's been a beautiful marriage, marvelous marriage. They've been married, I think, 28 years. My wife keeps track of these vital statistics, and they're living in Colorado, and they've given their whole lives to high school young people. They've given their whole lives to high school young people, not one of which children are their own.

And by the way. I totally respect that. But for myself and my wife, we wanted to have children. But by the way, I don't think any of those are reason enough to get married to this person. You could get married to any one of a number of persons and fulfill all of those. But why should I marry this person? I never get the answer. I've never gotten the answer yet without prompting. And of course, since I want the right answers, I end up prompting them. But the point is, once you get this idea, once you get this idea and it takes you enough, it's going to do something very special to your marriage.

And by the way, once we get by this barrier, from then on, the counseling reaches a new Plateau once we get by this question. And that is I want to marry this person because this is the person, the one person I most want to serve in my life. In other words, I want to serve everybody. But there's one person that I want to serve more than any other person in my life. Now, there is a

concomitant to that, and that is I want to be served by this person more than any other person in my life.

For example, if we were to come into a room and let's suppose that hot water has been provided and there's the packages of coffee, and someone says, we've got coffee, but it's instant coffee.

There's only one person in that room that I want to make my coffee, and that's my wife. She knows just how to do it. But I don't know. A coffee made by her is better than coffee made by anybody else. I don't care who it is.

And by the way. I could go on with that. Now when you get that feeling deeply enough, then it carries all the way into your sexual intimacy. You see, I want the fulfillment of sexual intimacy in my life. And I want this person to serve it. And that's my wife. And she feels the same way about me now, unless she's fooled me for a long time. The point that I'm trying to make dear friends is from such a simple thing as that. There's one person there's one person who does the best job in preparing my clothes, washing my skivvies, all the rest of them. Really, once you get that kind of, excuse me, how shall I put it? Exclusiveness that you will reserve unto yourself this one person.

And this one person will reserve you unto herself. There is something about the sense of service that this is the one person in all the world that I want 100% to serve. Now, there's no one else I feel quite like that. Maybe 99 and 44, 100, but no 100%. In other words, I want to serve her. She wants to serve me. And this is the exclusive person, by the way, that is the basis on which you begin to develop this relationship.

And when you can get that feeling why you want to marry this person, this person, then something begins to happen. There's a kind of Fidelity that becomes exceedingly strong where you have what I call mate primacy. This is my own word, mate primacy. And that becomes

terribly important to you. I always know that something's going wrong in a marriage when the mate no longer has primacy. Now, this oftentimes happen as you counsel a couple. I'm thinking of a couple right now. He developed a business, and he became very effective in that business. It's near Sacramento. His wife helped him develop the business. She became as integral to the business as he. The only thing is that it was all put in such a way that he really controlled the business.

If he really had the perception of love with her at the beginning and all that she contributed, it would have been held equally as indeed it should have been. There's no question in my mind that it should have been. If he loves enough in a society that's built like ours, then he's going to protect her right from the beginning.

For example, my wife and I have two bank accounts. One of them is in the name of Mark and Fern Lee. The other one is in the name of Fern and Mark Lee. She can do as much with the one account as the other one. But I just wanted it that way. And there's no reason in the world why he shouldn't have done the same thing. But now he becomes interested in another woman.

And all of a sudden the wife is thrown into another kind of relationship. Well, he realized what he had done was wrong and he began to straighten it out. But as he began to straighten it out, it was obviously not going to be straightened out. If it was going to follow his order. And I don't know why people do this, but they do it nonetheless. He had become emotionally involved with another member of his business. And so he said to me, what should I do? And I said, now you want me to really tell you? He said, yes, I want you to tell me. I said, you want me to tell you in the presence of your wife? Yes, I do. I said, you're going to have to fire her.

Oh, I can't do that. And I said, Why can't you? Well, she's got children and she's dependent on this job, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I said, Wait a moment. If you believe as I do in mate

primacy, you've already put your wife through hell for about three years. So much so, he had gone out and had rented this other person in an apartment. So they'd have a trusting place and all the rest of it. Now, it's interesting that you don't want to put that person through any difficult time or yourself through a difficult time. But you're willing to put your wife through a difficult time. In other words, you ought to set finally in your mind mate primacy. And if that mate primacy is such and it's understood, then you're not going to worry about quite so much about whether or not someone else is hurt.

You're going to be concerned whether or not that mate is hurt. I don't understand why he was unwilling to hurt the third party, but he was willing to hurt the person who had shared his life. So if there is a choice between my wife being hurt and the other party being hurt, if that's the option, the other party is going to have to be hurt.

By the way, I hope it doesn't come to that. But he had brought it to that. So had the third party. But isn't that harsh about the other woman? The other woman knew he was married. The other woman knew that his wife had made such an investment. The other woman knew that they had three children. The other woman knew that his wife had made all these sacrifices. The other woman knew what his wife was going through. Maybe she should lose her job. Are you following me? I'm open to challenge at any point.

But what utterly amazes me is that the person is so concerned about the feelings of that third party who has entered, no matter how much he generated it, she entered it nevertheless of her own will. And now the wife has to suffer. Someone says, well, really, how about jealousy there? I think there's an appropriate place for jealousy. I think there's an appropriate place, not the kind that eats you up so that if you see your husband across the room talking to another woman, you immediately shot through with, what are they talking about? But there is an appropriate kind of

jealousy when my wife no longer has even a smidgen of jealousy that means I no longer constitute a threat of any kind.

I'm already so decrepit with 1ft in the grave and the other banana Peel that she doesn't have to worry. There's something beautiful about still caring enough to believe that you're attractive enough to somebody else to better work hard at holding on to at least a certain degree. I noticed she's less and less jealous as the years go by, which upsets me enormously.

Number eight. That's not true. Number eight. Do you like each other? This is terribly important.

Oh, yes. I'm sorry.

Audience Member

Can you comment on how mate primacy relates to a pastor in this relationship to the Church?

Mark Lee

Yeah, I believe mate primacy. Oh, definitely, yes. This would require some perception. And by the way, we've worked on it a great deal. I've worked with a lot of companies, secular companies, as well as Christian companies relative to it. Are we okay? Can you see this?

Whoops. There we go. Okay, here we go. I think your first priority is God. Whatever it is that God's going to require, your second priority is your wife or husband or your mate. That's your second priority. Your third one, in my opinion, would be your children. I do not class the children with a mate. Children have to come later in the priorities. For example, if there's a difference between my children and my wife, I'll have to go with my wife.

And by the way. That strengthens life for the children. Then, in my opinion, your job comes next. And if your job is the Ministry, if your job is the Ministry, then that's still your job. By the way, you're going to do your job better, even if you're a Minister, if the priority is down there.

But my job does not come ahead of my wife. If the job comes ahead of my wife. The Apostle

Paul suggests in one Corinthians seven he shouldn't get married, first Corinthians nine. So in other words, Paul could not see anyone coming between himself and his Ministry. Therefore, he chooses not to marry one Corinthians nine. But for the rest of us who decide to marry, the wife and children are part of the total Ministry and they are the primacy part of our Ministry. Do you follow that?

Many a pastor gets us out of line. Many a pastor, but I don't think it's just that way. I was doing a job in communications for a company in Texas, and it happened to be a Christian company. And so this fella says, well, I'm going to give you a list of the we've got three men we're having trouble with.

I said, don't tell me. I'll tell you. And so I simply got their priorities. He put the three names in an envelope. I said, you put those three names in the envelope and I'll give you those three names. He says, I don't believe it. Put them in the envelope. He put them in the envelope. I gave an envelope with three names. The three names were the same in both envelopes. Now, the reason why was I asked for priorities and three men gave me, this is their priority. God first, job second, wife or children third, and wife or children fourth. Some of them put their children ahead of the wife. Some of them put wife ahead of the children. They had recreation. They had various other things mixed in in their priorities. I said, Those are three men, and he couldn't understand that. I said, A man who is even in the Ministry will do a better job in the Ministry if his wife is first than if he puts the Ministry ahead of his wife. You see, because I'll do my Ministry, but my job means so much to me because I'm working in part to develop a kind of security for my wife. So that the Ministry I'm going to do a better job in the Ministry if I care about my wife than I will in the Ministry if I reduce her somewhere beyond that. Any question about that? In my opinion, your first four priorities related to marriage and the family are those priorities.

And by the way there are others that come down later on. I have a friend of mine who because I'm not much for vacations. I think the last vacation we had full vacation was ten years ago. Was it? My wife keeps track of this. She's dealing with me, and by the time I'm 85, she's going to get me to believe it. But the point is we're working on it.

It seems to me that you need to understand what your priorities are and that your priorities coincide with the priorities of the person with whom you are going and share your life. Oh, one more. Make sure that you by the way, before we finish that one, if you're having trouble liking each other, you're having trouble liking each other. Take a look at your spats and try to analyze them. It's amazing how many of you get into arguments before you're married and you think somehow the day you get married, the arguments are over. Join the club, friends. That's not the way it works. If you're already having arguments, okay, but analyze those arguments to find out where they're leading. And in those analyses, you'll discover whether or not you like each other. And liking each other becomes terribly important. Not only you love each other, but you like each other.

Number nine. What irritates you most in his or her conduct? Now, usually when I ask a question the first time, if they haven't been engaged for very long, they can't come up with anything. And my answer is, if you can't come up with anything, you don't know each other well enough yet. If you don't have something in the other person that irritates you, you don't know them well enough yet. You're not that perfect. That something's not going to irritate you. So if you don't yet know what irritates you, then you just don't know that person. I remember this couple sitting in front of me, and I said, now what irritates you in his conduct? And she was quiet. I said, Come on, you got to tell me. Do I have to tell you? Yes. I said, well, why don't you want to tell me? And she

says, Because it irritates him when I tell you tell anybody. Not only was she irritated by something, but he was irritated that she was irritated by it. And I said, what is it?

She says, he bounces his foot. When he sits and crosses his leg, he bounces his foot. And I looked at him and he was bouncing his foot. I don't know if he had decided to do that because he knew what she was going to say. The following Sunday, I was preaching in the Church where his parents were members, and we were invited their house for dinner. And while we were eating dinner, the table started to move and I looked up and called her by name we knew quite well. And I called her by name. And I said, what's that? She said, oh, that's just my son bouncing his foot. By this time I was irritated by his little habit of always bouncing his foot. And then I said to the young Lady, I said, do you think that you can put up with that? She says, no, I don't think I can. Are you going to marry him anyway? By this time we had a whole flock of irritants. And do you think you're going to marry him anyway? She said, yes. I said, what are you going to do about those irritants? She says, I'll change him.

Famous last words. Those are some of the poorest words you will ever say about your future.

You see, down deep inside we have the idea if he loves me enough, he'll accept me. If she loves me enough, she'll accept me. This has happened over and over again quickly. I'll close with this and then we'll pick up tomorrow. I had a young couple come. They were absolutely fabulous looking couple. From one point of view and from another point of view, they were just entirely out of it.

He was thorough going in his way of doing things. She was thorough going in the way she did things. She was dual cultured. She was the daughter of missionaries. She had a masterful control of another language commonly used in the world, and also English. He was a fellow who was very hippie like. He liked to dress hippie like. He had long hair, which was anyone with hair is

attractive to me. It wasn't really clothed that well and it wasn't washed as often as it should be.

There are a whole series of things related to some other questions that come up here later on that would be irritants as far as he was concerned when he came up, he was going to the College where I am.

And when he come up to the trough, he would simply put his knees fairly wide apart, Put his elbows on the table, and then he'd have his head over the plate, So that he wouldn't lose anything.

And then he ate from the elbows Where she would sit there being a very sophisticated kind of person. Now, the reason why she got interested in him was something I said much earlier in the hour. And that is the differences attract here. She was clean, she was well manicured, she was well groomed and all the rest of it. And when you saw them together, they looked as different as any two people could look. And finally I asked what irritated her about him?

And she began on these things. And I looked over and I said, are those true, Dave? And he says, yeah, they're true. I said, are you going to change? He says, I don't think so. And I said, why not?

And the answer came back, I'm going to accept her just the way she is. He's getting a fairly attractive package. I thought, I'm going to accept her just the way she is. I love her.

She's going to accept me just the way I am. She loves me. And then they looked at me and said, what is it? And I said, you two aren't going to make it. You're not going to make it because there is an unwillingness to recognize the differentials. Well, finally they did. And before they got through the 50 questions along about 34, 35, I've forgotten. At one point she looked up and she says, we're not going to make it, are we? And I said, no, you're not.

And ultimately, he married someone who likes people who come up to the trough and eat from their elbows. That's the way of it. And we need to understand something about all of life. Are you going to be able to put up with this person habits and all for the next 50 years? See,

fortunately, our forefathers died earlier, and as a result, they didn't have to put up with things that long. One of the reasons why marriages do not last as long is that they have to last longer than they did with our forefathers. 200 years ago, the average length of life was 36 years. Now it's 72. And you can see that we're called upon to do so very much more.

Shall we have prayer? Lord, we're grateful to you for your care for us. And we pray that what we think of here will guide us in the course of certain decisions that must be made and made for not only the glory of God, but for our own happiness. We ask your wisdom in Christ's name. Amen.

Thanks.