

MANAGING LIFE SERIES: BEFORE TYING THE KNOT PRT 1

If someone would ask you to put the following relationships in order of importance, what would your list look like:

- Work, kids, ministry, marriage, God

I believe that the following is the correct priority list:

1. God
 2. Marriage/spouse
 3. Kids
 4. Work/ministry
- Everything starts with God and when you take God out of it, the center will not hold. God brings 2 people together for a mission and purpose to fulfill here on earth.
 - Marriage becomes a key element of fulfilling your destiny. You need to be prepared for this thing called marriage. That is why this morning, I want to talk to you on the subject matter **BEFORE TYING THE KNOT**¹.
 - If you are not married, you better listen attentively because what you will hear in the coming forty minutes will influence the rest of your life. To the married, you better pay attention because you will be equipped to help raise godly marriages around you.
 - Lets put things into perspective – marriage was and has always been God's idea to express His character and nature here on earth. In other words, marriage is better lived within the bounds formulated by its creator, God.
 - Every time you live outside the bounds put in place by the marriage originator, you will not make it to the end with joy.

Genesis 2:18 And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.

Proverbs 19:14 Houses and riches are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

- What this means is that we need to start the journey of marriage with God in mind – don't start and then invite Him afterwards. Yes, God is gracious but some of the married people are living the sowing and reaping principle – they are reaping the seed of excluding God at some point of their marriage journey.

¹ "Tying the Knot" originates from the ancient Celtic wedding tradition known as 'Handfasting', where two willing suitors would tie or 'fasten' their hands together using knots of cloth.

MANAGING LIFE SERIES: BEFORE TYING THE KNOT PRT 1

- Because marriage is a godly institution, God prepares and preserves you for marriage before it starts. In the same way, the devil tends to attack your marriage before it even begins.
- The foundation of your marriage is your pre-marriage years. If Satan can sneak in and mess you up during those foundational years, then he is well on the way to destroying your marriage in the future.
- The stronger the foundation, the stronger the building can be – healthy marriages have strong foundations. Guess what, foundations are hidden and not beautiful, and this means that the success of your marriage is mainly dependent on what you do in secret.
- What is God's pattern and progression towards marriage? There is an order that God has put in place that should set you up for a healthy marriage.

Genesis 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh.

- Here we have three phases of progression towards marriage and the phases happen in a certain order and sequence. It is that type of progression that you cannot skip a phase or join two phases.
- 3 phases towards a godly marriage.
 - Phase 1 - leaving
 - Phase 2 – Cleaving
 - Phase 3 – One flesh

Phase 1 – Leaving

- Jehovah declared in verse 24 *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother.”*
- Understanding the concept of leaving will help answer the question of when one should start considering a romantic relationship.
- What this means is that you should not get emotionally and romantically involved with someone until you are ready to leave mother and father.
- A person who is ready to leave:
 - Is emotionally strong to stand the pressures of life by themselves,
 - understands who they are in the Lord (spiritually mature),
 - can finance their lively hood (you can pay your way through the month).
- If the answer is no to these things, then it's not yet time to start getting involved with someone.

MANAGING LIFE SERIES: BEFORE TYING THE KNOT PRT 1

- If you are not ready to cope without mom and dad then, don't take another person along the way. Parents end up having to parent a stranger in the house because you brought them along. You need to be mature enough in every way to live as an adult who can cope without all parental intervention.
- Now that you are ready to leave, what is the next phase towards a godly marriage?

Phase 2 – Cleaving

Genesis 2: 24...and shall cleave to his wife

- Cleaving in verse 24 means to adhere, to abide fast together, to follow someone.
- Cleaving results in being emotionally and romantically bound to someone and to be closely knitted with them.
- Clearly the progression makes sense in that if you are still bound to mother and father, you will not be able to properly cleave to another person.
- In other words, you must not cleave until you are ready to leave.
- God designed you as an emotional being, with the ability to connect with others at an emotional level.
- There are some instances in the bible that show that the soul is the portion that joins us emotionally to other people. Here are two examples:
- Jacob and Benjamin's father-son relationship: *Genesis 44:30 "...his life is bound up in the lad's life and his soul is knit with the lad's soul."*
- This speaks of a wonderfully close relationship between a father and his son.
- Jonathan and David: *1 Samuel 18: 1 "The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David"*
- The ability to connect at an emotional level is a God given gift to enable you to stick to your spouse for life.
- Let's read again what the word says here – *Genesis 2:24...and shall cleave unto his wife.*
- The Lord did not leave us guessing as to who we shall cleave to – he says unto his wife.
- In God's eyes, you should only cleave to your spouse. In other words, there is no room for one to be cleaving around until you find your spouse.
- Your soul's ability to stick with another soul is actually good for marriage but your soul can not distinguish between the future spouse and just an attractive person.
- There are both good and bad soul ties – the tie between a mother and child is powerful and good.
- It has been observed that even pure relationships in early teens can form ties for life.

MANAGING LIFE SERIES: BEFORE TYING THE KNOT PRT 1

- Soul ties develop when you share yourself emotionally or physically with another person, not just through sex.
- This can be through:
 - Spending time alone together, talking about deep and personal and emotional things,
 - keeping each other's secrets, love letters, thinking about, kissing, touching, hugging each other over a prolonged period.
- I know that you might be asking questions like; how do I know if she is my wife without cleaving and how far does one go with cleaving. I will deal with those issues next week
- But for now, the key point here is that do not cleave before you are ready to leave.
- Now that you have cleaved, what is the next phase?

Phase 3 – Becoming one flesh.

Genesis 2:24... and they shall be one flesh

- The Lord says that “*and the two shall become one flesh*” – this is a loaded phrase and lets unpack it a little bit.
- Becoming one is biblical language for having sex and it represent the complete joining of a man and woman in marriage. That is why it is called making love – when you have sex with your boyfriend, you are not making love you are fornicating. The next time he says to you lets make love, correct him, and say we are not going to make love, we are going to fornicate.
- This simply means that sex is reserved only for you and your spouse. If you had a child out of wedlock, it does not mean that you have the right to keep sleeping with that man even it has been over a period of 10yrs. You cannot legitimize cohabiting because of the length of time involved.
- Just like fire is awesome when it is in the fireplace, it warms up the room, but it is not so awesome when it is outside the fireplace. Outside the fireplace, the fire can be quite devastating and dangerous. This is the same thing with sex – it is great when exercised in marriage but is very devastating when done outside of marriage.
- When you practice sex outside of marriage, you are joining yourself with those people – when you move from one person to the other, you will always leave something behind. That is why a lot of people will struggle to fully become one with their spouse because they are no longer complete. Use the analogy of 2 pieces of paper stuck together with glue.
- We said the pre-marriage years are foundational to your marriage and the enemy is interested in weakening that foundation.

MANAGING LIFE SERIES: BEFORE TYING THE KNOT PRT 1

- The devil weakens the foundation by perverting the order put in place by God.
- A perverted progression and order can result in a perverted marriage.
- I have observed that the worldly pattern of dating is designed to reserve God's order.
- The devil will lure you to first become one flesh before you even leave mom and dad. He will make you become one flesh before you cleave.
- This is the concept of the one-night stands where you become one with someone you don't even know from a bar of soap.
- If the devil does not get you in this fashion, he will get you to cleave as many times as possible.
- The whole idea of dating before you are ready to leave paves way for multiple cleavings and separations.
- They result in heart breaks and soul ties that will mess you up when it is time to cleave to your spouse.
- The multiple break-ups you will experience will make you an expert in mini divorces. You are getting used to getting into relationships which don't have the lasting power and will – at a whim of challenges, you will throw in the towel.