

LESSON 9

THE IMPORTANCE OF COURTSHIP

Scripture Texts: Romans 12:1-2; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Titus 2:6-12; James 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:12; Romans 14:21

Some homes become Christian after establishment. This is good, but the best way is that a home be founded upon Jesus Christ from its very beginning. If it is to be, the courtship must also be Christian.

So much depends upon our dating and courtship—our lives, the lives of others, the homes we set up, and our service to God—that they must not be guided by chance or one's own human judgment. Parents and older saints can give good counsel, but God promises to direct the path of those who trust Him and lean not to their own understanding.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"*

Amos 3:3

Protect Your Body

In Romans 12:1-2 God commands all people to present their bodies a living sacrifice for all of life. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, as we read in 1 Corinthians 6:19. In our bodies we carry on all activities of this earthly life. The body is the tool of the mind and spirit. We can protect body, mind, and spirit by giving them over in holy, acceptable service unto God. Young people as well as older ones who give their bodies in this way will not be conformed to this world. They will not follow the pattern set by worldly people. People thus dedicated will conduct their courtship in a way pleasing to God. They will not be conformed to this world, but they are to be transformed by Christ's life within them so that they do God's perfect will.

In the earlier lessons we have tried to bring the minds of the youth to think of their youthful years as a time for serious thought and planning and not just as a time for fun and frivolity. In this lesson we will see how our lives can be a beautiful part of God's plan.

In Ecclesiastes 12:1 we are reminded to remember now the Creator in the days of thy youth. He tells us that it is the time to think about God and turn to Him. Mental and physical faculties are at their best then. Hope, zeal, and initiative are strong. The heart is not yet hardened and the will bound by sin. Young people saved early will carry on a Christian courtship. They will purpose to establish a Christian home. They will desire to serve God with their joined lives.

When God, in Titus 2:6, advised young men and women to be sober-minded, he did not mean for them to be pessimistic or sour. He meant for them to set their minds on things that really matter, to seek for wheat rather than chaff. He meant for them to desire eternal things more than passing, temporary things.

Deny Yourself

In Titus 2:12 we are told to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Unregenerated young people are guided by desires, or lusts, uncontrolled by God's will. This is sin. They seek worldly possessions, popular favor, power, and material security. They seek pleasure, thrills, and adventure. God said to flee these and live soberly, righteously, and godly.

God gave young people a desire for the companionship of the opposite sex. It is a good desire. He made rules for its right enjoyment. They are good rules. Only when we break His rules and let lust rule does trouble come. Some, disobeying God, bring a lifetime of sorrow upon themselves and their families. All things are lawful, young folks often say, but not all things are expedient for us. If an act would hurt one's reputation or bring dishonor to another, we must not do it. Even though it is lawful, if it dishonors Christ, we must not do it.

Protect Your Mind and Spirit

We cannot follow the world's courtship standards. They have been set by low literature, motion pictures, TV programs, etc. Respectable people, let alone Christians, should reject as unthinkable some of the physical intimacies common today such as free touching and handling of one of the opposite sex, improper positions such as lying down or lolling while entertaining, petting, and kissing when there is no real love or engagement. Young people should never entertain alone without any other adult in the house. These and like practices cater to worldly and youthful lust and lead very often to sin and heartbreak.

Many young people see so much false, or counterfeit, love that they do not know when there is a true love. Playing with the false so defiles lives as to render one unable to fully experience the true when the time comes. Manipulating another's affections is a matter that leads to deep problems. Unhappiness, divorce, bitterness, and sin follow the trail of these cheated ones.

Dating

It is wrong to date a person whom, for any reason, one has no right to marry. We should not make intimate friends of those who do not love the Lord, or of those of a false religion. To date those ones invites problems. Any act that defiles your body, any thought that defiles your spirit, and any word or story that defiles your mind will bring destruction to you. Right courtship is carried on realizing that body, mind, and spirit belong to God. Ye are bought with a price—the price of the life of the Son of God, as we read in 1 Corinthians 6:20. That measures our obligation to glorify God in our bodies, minds, and spirits.

JUST A THOUGHT

Nothing is politically right when it is morally wrong.