

## **4 Ways Single People Can Prepare for Marriage**

- Okay, you could be honest, but don't be too honest 'cause I have low self-esteem. And I'm gonna ask a question. Have you enjoyed the Real Romance series? Those of you who have hung in there for it, Amen, okay? And if you didn't like it, it's free, and you get what you pay for. So we're gonna finish the series today, we're doing the last sermon in the series and next week, just a little teaser, we're gonna start a sermon series on Elijah. If Rob Zombie and Alice Cooper put together a sermon series at a haunted house, they would call it Elijah. That's where we're going next week. It's gonna be really intense. This one will be fun though. So here's where we find ourselves today. Four Ways Single People Can Prepare For Marriage. Okay, so how many of you're single? How many of you're single? Woo, okay, one guy's enthusiastic about it. We know not why, we know not why. There's a prayer team in the back, we can deliver you. Okay, so we're gonna talk about singles, 'cause you single people have hung in there for all the marriage series, and now we're gonna, but this is actually a sermon that could help everybody. Let me tell you how, if you are single, maybe you're dating, maybe you're engaged, this one's gonna be a bullseye. If you are newly married, you're gonna go back and revisit, maybe your parents' marriage, maybe dating relationships before you met your spouse, or maybe how you started your relationship. If you're divorced, and hoping to remarry, this should be a good tune up and reset for you. If you're like me, you're a parent or a grandparent, and you've got kids that are wanting to have romantic relationships, you're like, how do we navigate this? This is a good sermon for us as parents and grandparents, as some of you are wise counsel, you're coaches, youth leaders, teachers, mentors, and you want to help people have good relationships as well. So we're gonna talk in large part to those who are younger, and single, or for them, and what I'm gonna do in this sermon, I'm gonna put a dad hat on. So I've got, well Gracie's got five kids too. I was gonna say I got five kids, so does Grace. It's just weird how that works. So we got five kids, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. I got it right, right? Okay, we didn't put it, you know we didn't have, like, a chart every other year, here comes another person just worked out that way. And so the oldest two are married, and then number three is actually in the premarital class, and then we've got one in college, one in high school, and so I'm gonna tell you some things I've been telling our kids, since they were little, and they're doing way better than we did, and their marriages are off to a better start. So let me start by speaking first and foremost, to or about single men. Don't raise your hand 'cause I'm about to insult you. So the way this works, single men today are not in a position where they are ready to marry. They've actually created a category called NILF, N-I-L-F, and what this is Not In Labor force, we used to call it deadbeat, but instead, we decided to have an acronym. There are now a record number of able-bodied young men not in the workforce. We dealt with this at Real Men recently on a Wednesday night, and I'll revisit it briefly see you guys on Wednesday night. But today there is a record number of able-bodied men who are not working full, or part-time jobs, and have no intention of doing so at any time in the near future. In addition, there are 7 million men just not in the workforce, not doing anything. Ladies, let me just ask an honest question, if you are single, do you want your man to have a job? Yes or no?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Yes, see, a lot of times guys don't understand, guys are like, "I bet you she really is into my car stereo." No, she's not, no she's not, no, she's not, she could care less. In fact, what she wants is a Bible and a job. Those are her love languages, okay? So what happens then is today, young men are not ready for marriage, and part of it is the government just destroyed an entire generation and their future a few years ago. Oh, let's talk about that. So what happened was this thing called COVID hit. And the government said, "Hey, be a good citizen. Go home, sit on the couch, and don't do anything." And a lot of young men said, "Oh, for the rest of my life," and that's kind of what they heard. So a whole generation of young men goes home, who are not at high risk for COVID anyways, And, and rather than working, they just go home. And what happened then was they left the labor force, and who did they live with? Their mother. So a record number of young men left the labor force, and also moved back in with their mother. We now have record number of young men not working, and a record number percentage wise of young men, 20s and 30s living with their mother, okay? So let me just ask the mothers, is this a good idea? See here, we just found the problem, they're like, "I don't know." Okay, we'll ask the, the fathers, "Men, is this a problem?"

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Louder, quicker, more assertive. We've just hit the parenting breach, we've just reached our problem. Now, what we see as well today, 63% of young men in their 20s are not dating a girl, not intending to pursue any woman, they're just out of, they're out of relationship. Only 34% of young women are single, okay? And I got this from the CDC, so we're just following the science. We're just following the science. So, let's say 2/3 of men aren't in a relationship, but only 1/3 of women are not in a relationship. How does that work? Thanks for asking, there's two answers. Number one, younger women are dating older men, or more than one guy. That's a potty mine, that's a potty mine right there. That's a potty mind. Wow, sir, Old Town is down there. That's so younger women are dating older men, and also they're bisexual, and if they can't meet a guy, they are dating each other. I wish you could see your face, it's awesome from here, just be like, okay. So what we see now is that what are the young men doing? They're not working, they're not going to college, they're not in church, they're not living on their own, they're at their mom's house, and what are they doing? Video games, pornography, and social media, or as I like to call them, the beast, the false prophet, and the anti-Christ. Those three variables. So now they have record mental health, record mental health. The only thing that young men are better at than women is killing themselves. Young men, particularly in their 20s that marrying window, 20s and early-30s, four times more likely to end their life. Here's what I'm telling you, you have been lied to, and it's not working. And so at the end of the day, of course if you're 30, okay, let me just say this, if I was 30, just, if I was 30, and I put my faith in Joe Biden, instead of Jesus Christ, I didn't have a job. I lived with my mother. I didn't have a girl, or a girl on the horizon, and my decision every day was whether to waste my life on Twitter or TikTok, I would be depressed. So I would turn off my phone, I would go get at least one job, and start voting for people who expect me to go to work. That's what I would do. So for you young men, you need to know that you have been lied to. And ultimately you were told that to be a good man is to go home, and to be passive, and to be one who is under the authority of government, not God, and over-mothered

and under-fathered. Okay, I haven't said anything controversial yet, so we've reached that point in the sermon. So men, young men are over-mothered, under-fathered, all the fathers said, Amen. And so, okay, I'm gonna back up in case he throws something. So when the boy is little, does he need his mother? Yes, so mother's in the first position, father's in the second position. When the boy gets older, needs his father, controversial, more than his mother. Okay, all the dad said way more, and all the moms are tweeting about their displeasure. Because what happens when a boy is little, a mom's instincts are protect him, feed him, nurture him, keep him out of harm's way, make sure he succeeds and he feels good about himself. When he is in his 20s, dad says, "You need to let him grow up, make some mistakes, stumble over his own feet, earn his own food, get off the payroll, lose a little bit." And so what happens is, if you don't have a father who steps in those crucial years, you get boys all the way to retirement, they never become men. Grace and I have had this conversation, we've got three boys, two girls. And when the kids were little, they really, really needed her, and they needed me, but they really, really needed her. As they get older, they really, really need me, now they need her, but they really need me. And so there was a certain point with each one of our sons where I told Grace, I was like, "I got this. You know, he's gonna flunk that class, right? He's gonna wreck that car. You know, we're not gonna let him kill himself. But you know, he's gonna get close. Like he's got to figure this out. He's got to figure this out. And so the way you build men is through adversity, and hardship, and mothers and governments always try to remove any adversity, hardship, or difficulty, and as a result we don't get men, and we don't get men who are ready to marry, and have children, and pay the bills. And now what we have is the most foolish, cultural governmental plan you could conceive of. Men who are dependent, not independent, government and mother is taking care of them. We do not have enough people making babies to replace population. We have racked up incredible national debt, and we don't have men going to work to actually tax to pay it off. This is a complete and total collapse. So what I want to tell you in particular, young men, stop looking out at the fool's parade, and just look up to your Father, and ask Him what His will is for your life. Okay, that's what we're gonna do now. All of that to say, if you're here, and you're in your 20s and you're like, "I'm triggered, and I'm troubled, and this just sounds all very wrong." You've been lied to, you don't know what you're doing, it's not working, and I tell you that, not 'cause I hate you, 'cause I love you. And once you realize this, you'll see that you have been lied to, and it's not working. So what we're gonna do, we're looking at four ways single people can prepare for marriage. We're gonna start, here's our last section in the Song of Songs, Back to the Future. Song of Songs 8:8 through 14. So these are the gal's brothers. So there's the husband, the wife, and the brothers. And the brothers say, "We have a little sister." So they're going back to the days when she was a little girl and her breasts are not yet grown, she's little. "What shall we do for our sister in the day she is spoken for," the brothers are helping her get ready for her wedding day. "If she is a wall, we will build towers on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar." It's like hurricane season, we're gonna go get plywood, and we're gonna make sure that she's protected. And she says, "I'm a wall. My breasts are like towers. No boy's gonna touch me. Thus I've become in his eyes, like one bringing contentment. Solomon had," that's her husband, "Had a vineyard in Baal Hamon, he let out his vineyards to the tenants. Each was to bring for its fruit, a thousand shekels of silver, but my own vineyard is mine to give, the thousand shekels are for you Solomon. And the

200 are those for those who tend its fruit." And then he says, "You who dwell in the gardens with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice." And then she concludes, "Come away, my beloved. Be like a gazelle or a young stag," literally calls him a stud. It's worked for 3,000 years, it's that awesome, "On the spice-laden mountains." So here's what's weird, chapter eight in the Song of Songs, we've looked at their life, and now they've been married for a season, and they're older, but a lot of people struggle to interpret this last chapter, 'cause it goes back to when they were little kids. Let me explain this to you. In our world or in the western culture, how do we tell a story? Beginning, middle, end. They lived happily ever after. Now in the more Eastern mindset of the Old Testament, the way you tell a story is beginning, middle, beginning. It's just a different mindset. I'll give you a few examples. Genesis One, creation. Genesis Two, creation. Beginning, middle, beginning, middle, beginning. It's a beginning,-middle-beginning story. Your whole Bible is a beginning-middle-beginning story. First two chapters, God and people are together, everything is perfect, there is no sin, there's no death, there's a beautiful garden, there's a Tree of Life, and then, sin happens. Beginning, middle from Genesis Three all the way to the Second Coming of Jesus, that's the middle, and what the middle is preparing us for? the beginning. Revelation 21 and 22, the last two chapters in the Bible, just like the first two, God and people together, angels are present, no sin, no demons, no death, everyone's happy, the garden is open, and the Tree of Life is available, because God got it right the first time, we got it wrong. So God doesn't move from His plan, He continues with this plan. See we made it wrong, but God got it right the first time. So here's the big idea. If you wanna have a good ending, you need to have a good beginning. Your beginning determines your end. And if you don't have a good beginning, you need to go back, and get a new beginning. Jesus calls this being born again. See, so many of us, we just, we've had years without Jesus. All of a sudden you're like, I've got my life, and my job, and my mental health, and my relationships, and my marriage, and my kids, and then how do I add Jesus? You don't, you need a new beginning. You need to go back, and be born again, and then build everything on that relationship with Jesus. You need a new beginning. What we're seeing here in the Song of Songs, they've been married for a long time, but they're going back, and they're looking at when they were little kids. And this is what's really important. If you want to have a good ending, you need to make sure that you've got the right beginning, and so here's what she is saying. She is saying that she grew up poor, probably raised by a single mother. Her mother is mentioned, her brothers are mentioned. Through the course of the book, her father never appears. We don't know if they're divorced or he's dead. How contemporary is it? 3000 years later, she grew up poor, raised by a single mother, very contemporary story. And what she says is, Solomon, her husband, he grew up very rich. They had vineyards that they rented out 'cause they didn't even need that land. She grew up very poor, and what she said was the only vineyard she had was her character and her own body. What she said was, "The only thing I had was my character and my body, and so I wanted to cultivate that, so that one day I could be married, and have a good marriage." So as Solomon was rich, and she was poor, what she's saying is that she's been preparing her character and protecting her body since she was a little girl. And then the brothers come along, and they have this interesting analogy. They say that there are two kinds of young women, walls and doors. Interesting analogy. What's the between a wall and a door? A wall, nobody's getting in. A door, might be able to get in. You young women need to know, some are walls, some are

doors, okay? You ever met a gal who's a door? You ever met a gal who's a wall? Guys, let's talk about the gals who are walls. Okay gentlemen, you meet a gal who's a wall, do you know pretty quickly? "How you doing?" "Leave me alone." "Oh, okay, well, okay, well, what's your sign?" "911. That's my sign." "Well, okay. Hey, do you wanna have drinks?" "Never, you're dead to me." "Oh, okay." We're clear. Okay. Some gals, they are not flirting, and if you try, they're gonna let you know that ain't gonna work, okay? Now don't raise your hand ladies, 'cause we don't wanna ruin your future. But how many of you, that's you? You're like, "I like dumping guys. Yeah, I'm, I just break guy's hearts," I'm just fine with that, okay? How many of you gals, you're more doors, door? Little more hope and possibility for the guys. Some gals are doors in that they attract attention. They don't even understand why, some of your gals, you're cute, you're extroverted, you're flirtatious, you're like, "I don't know why boys are interested in me." Well, I know, but anyways. And some gals intentionally draw attention to themselves. They dress in a way that it's like, "I'm here." And when they show up, they let everybody know, lots of attention, lots of drama, lot, right, they just sort of own the room. Some gals that are doors, this'll be just a thing, but they're a little, they're a little needy and insecure. I need a boyfriend, I need a boy, I can't be alone, I got to be in a relationship. I need a boy." Okay, let me ask the dads. Does a young woman need a boyfriend?

- No.

- No, no. It was quick, okay. A lot of gals are like, I don't know. Well ask a grown man, he'll tell you. And here's the deal, ladies, you don't need a boyfriend, you don't need a boy, you'll be fine. How do I know I have never had a boyfriend? And I'm fine, I'm totally fine. Amen.

- Okay, I've already field tested this for you. I can verify. And sometimes a gal who's a door, she's got fear of man or people pleasing. So she doesn't like to say no, and she's like, "Well, he called me, Do I need to call him back?" Or "He texted, do I need to text him back?" Or "He, you know, he DMed me, do I need to respond," or "He wants to go out and I just, I feel bad saying no, and so I'm just gonna go out with him once, or maybe we'll just try, and keep it friends, or not let it get too serious." It's all management of a dysfunctional relationship. Those are doors. And what she says is wall, door, what was she growing up? Wall, she didn't attract a lot of attention, and when she did, she took care of it. The brothers say, "If she was a door, we're gonna make sure we nail that door shut." So you got to ask yourself, ladies, wall or door. And ultimately, you wanna protect yourself, so that you can prepare yourself for marriage. That's what she's saying. What's interesting here as well, they're going back to their early years, and if you give science and brain science enough time, I always like to say eventually it catches up with the Bible. Here we are 3,000 years later, and what the counselors will tell us is the problems that most people have actually started when they were very little. And unless you go back to deal with those early issues, you're not going to have a healthy future, beginning, middle, beginning. You need to go back to go forward. And so what the counselors will tell us is that if you want to have a healthy life and, or marriage, you got to go back and look at your past. A lot of people are like, "I don't wanna deal with the past. That's in the past, I've moved on." Well, if you're so emotional, you may not be healed from it. And by going back it's, like, what was my parents' marriage like?

What were my early memories? Was I ever abused? What were my first dating experiences? When we got together, before we were married, what did we do? And ultimately in the early years of our marriage, did we set some good or bad habits in place? And so counselors will talk a lot about positive and negative. Positive is attachment, and negative is trauma. Positive attachment, now even the growing field of brain science says if you grow up with healthy, emotional, relational attachments, it helps you become a healthy, functional adult. So if your mom holds you, and kisses you, and rocks you, and connects with you, that actually mentally, physically, spiritually heals you and matures you, if no one connects with you, the only time your parents touch you is to spank you. If most of what they say is negative, and not positive, it's condemning, and it's not encouraging, well then what you're starting to have is detachment, which means it's hard as you get older to be attached because you don't have this habit of being emotionally connected to someone who is safe. So that's attachment, and then they would talk about trauma, and that is where something really damaging happens. And what either of these will do, positive or negative attachment, and, or trauma, they'll create in the brain, they're telling us now, neural pathways. That literally it hardwires your response system. So if you grow up with trauma and you're like, "Every time I was in the presence of a man, something bad happened." What's gonna happen when you're in the presence of your husband? You're gonna feel unsafe. If every gal you've ever dated, cheated on you, and you get married, you may have a lot of trust issues with your wife. If your mom and dad fought all the time, you may have a lot of fear going into marriage. If you grew up in a home where your mom got divorced, and remarried six times, you're gonna have a hard time thinking that marriage is a safe place. And so what they're telling us now is that the reason that a lot of people are struggling today is they've not processed or healed from what happened when they were young. So here in Song of Songs eight, they go back and revisit. She says, "Here was my childhood, I didn't have a dad." She's gotta process that. "I did have a mom and my brothers were good brothers, but we were very poor, and I was a wall. I didn't get a lot of guy attention. And when I did, I kind of had to defend myself, 'cause my dad wasn't there to protect me." That's what she's saying. Now, the key is sometimes you gotta go backward to go forward. And sometimes these things come up as you enter into marriage, and a lot of times people don't want to deal with the past. They wanna bury it, and let me just say this, you need to deal with it. It's kinda like a bow and arrow. You go back so you can go forward. This was Grace and I's story. For us, we met at 17, we've shared our story, neither of us were virgins, Grace was not walking with the Lord, I was not a Christian. We started dating, she had a bad guy stalking her, trying to harm her, and run me over, and all kinds of interesting details. And then we started sleeping together., guess what? Can we build a successful marriage on this foundation? No Jesus, no prayer, no Bible, no worship. It's like, is that a good beginning? It's a bad beginning. What's the end gonna be without beginning? Disaster. So what we had to do, I became a Christian. Grace came back in a relationship with the Lord. We stopped sleeping with each other, we started going to church, started going to Bible study, starting to obey God, inviting God into our relationship, and Lord over our relationship, now you know what we got? New beginning, and now, we can have a better ending. But we had to deal with those foundational issues. So we've been faithfully married for 30 years. Before I move to the next point, I want to ask Grace one honest question. You ready? Sure. If we hadn't gone back, and dealt with things from the past, and created a new

beginning, would we be married today? No. And it's not, 'cause we didn't love each other, we did. And it wasn't because we shouldn't be together, we should. But if you wanna have a good ending, you got to make sure you go back and get a new beginning. So that's first and foremost. Number two, the success sequence. This will be pretty quick. How many of you would like to avoid poverty, and have a better life? All in favor say aye.

- Aye.

- Okay, here we go. If you wanna avoid poverty with a 97% success rate, which is really good, you wanna live a better life, and leave a better legacy, do these three things in order. Number one, graduate from high school. Number two, find a full-time job. Number three, get married before you have kids, right? So that's the statistical evidence. You would think, so let me just deal with this. In our day, most of our social problems are that people are not following the success sequence. Wouldn't you think in high school, they'd be like, "Oh, since we start following the science, well, science tells us, graduate, get married, make babies. Okay, write that down, kids, there'll be a test." We don't tell anybody that. What we tell everybody is, well, you know, "We're not gonna educate you, and you know, sleep with whoever you want, and you know, if you don't want a kid, terminate the life," what? Most of our social ills would be resolved if people just did three things in the right order. How many of you know the right order is important, right? It's important, that's why it's like, put your underwear on, then your pants, right? If you're like, "I did both," you're like, "Yeah, but it's not the same, you know, it's awkward. You gotta get the sequence right. And so what we're not preparing people for is adulthood, and marriage, and work, and parenting. We're letting themself destruct in the name of freedom and tolerance. And what I'm telling you is God made you, and He made you, male or female, and God made marriage, and God made life, and God made parenting, and God tells us exactly what the success sequence is, and how to operate this body, this soul, this mind, this life, this marriage, this family, this job that God has given you. So I don't know if you guys know this, I have a Bronco. I love it. I've accepted it in my heart. I've got a new Bronco. And, and so when I got the new Bronco, it was designed and engineered by someone who meticulously thought through everything, and then gave me something so that I could operate it. It was called an owner's manual. It's actually on the screen. Now, let's say that I go to community college, and I take a philosophy class, and I just feel like that's very binary and limiting to obey the manual. And I'm like, you know, I think I don't want the gas in the gas tank, and the water in the radiator. I'm somewhere on a fluid spectrum. So what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna, I'm gonna put, probably shouldn't have said that, but in this, you know, so I'm just gonna, I'm gonna put the gas in the radiator, and I'll put the water in the gas tank, right? And I'm gonna have a whole month where we celebrate this, and we encourage other people to do the same. Hey, what's gonna happen to my Bronco? It's gonna die. And then I'll feel like I'm a victim, and I will, then I vote for an elected official to give me a new Bronco, because I'm a victim, okay? No, this is what we're dealing with. If you don't obey the manual, you're going to break what you were given. It's not going to work, and it's not because you're a victim, it's because you're a fool. I feel like this is probably not the best point to collect the offering. So the third point, for those of you who are single, here's the question that single people always have. Where is the line versus when is the time? So let me

explain this. So most single people are like, okay, all right, so we're Christians. Okay, so how much can we do? How much can we do, all right? And they never have their hands in their pocket when they ask this question, they're like, "So how much can we do? So where's the line?" And then they wanna know where the line is, so that they can dance vigorously on it continually, right? "We didn't cross it," you're like, "I can't even see it. You've erased the line, you've danced on it so vigorously." So let me ask the dads this 'cause it's always clear when you're a dad. So dad, does this potentially reveal a bad heart in a young man?

- Yes.

- Yes, right? Because what he's asking is, how much can I get away with before the dad kills me, and Jesus sends me to hell? Like, probably not the purest heart, okay? Here's the issue. The issue is not where is the line, but when is the time? So there's a line in the Song of Songs, let me say you a few things. Ah, let me deal with the verse. Here we go, Song of songs. I like how it says it repeatedly, "Do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time." Right, so the point is there are certain things that don't happen until you're married. Here's what it says in Ephesians 5:3, "Among God's people, there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality." That word is porneia, we get our word pornography from it, it's a junk drawer word for all kinds of sexual sin. Guys like, "Well, you know, we're dating, we're living together, but we're not sleeping together." Okay, first you're weird. And second, that is more than a hint, right? You're like, "Well, we, we go on vacation together, but we're not married, but we sleep in the same hotel room, but we don't do anything, you could trust us. We just read Leviticus," like, okay, what, what? So 1 Timothy 5:2 says, "For younger men to treat younger women as sisters in all purity." You can talk to your sister, you can hang out with your sister, you can care about your sister, but physically you're not crossing lines with your sister. So there's an emotional connection, a relational, spiritual connection, but not a physical connection until marriage. So let me tell you what's going on, and why this is crushing marriage. In the last 50 years in America, marriage rates have plummeted by 60%, okay? In addition, what we're seeing now is the dating scene. Look, if you're in your 20s trying to date, like we're praying for you, I can't, I mean, you are living, you're living in a horrific day to try to find somebody, okay? I mean the dating pool is a septic tank, that's what it is. It's unbelievable, because what happened some years ago, you kids are too young to know. They created the automobile, people started buying it, guys came home from war, they bought a car, and rather than going to hang out with a gal, with her parents, or at their house, or a church, he picked the gal up, and he drove her away from everybody who knew her, and he'd take her out to dinner, or a movie, or to a dance hall, and now, because he bought a car, and because he'd spent money, and because he got dressed up, and because he spent some money for the date, he was expecting something in return. And this put a lot of pressure on young women, and put women in a position, unfortunately, of danger. So now what happens is it's like, well, "If you won't do that, then I won't date you. I'll date them," and all of a sudden, it creates this competitive environment among young women, and they're really pressured to do things they'd rather not do, otherwise they're going to be rejected, and they'll get a bad reputation for not being the one who makes the dreams come true for the boy, true or false, ladies, there's a lot of pressure? There's a lot of pressure. And so the dating scene is

really unhealthy, and so what happens then is a lot of young couples, they think, well, let's just live together, rather than getting married. At least then we're a little more safe and secure than just this random casual dating relationship. 70% of marriages today are preceded by cohabitation, 70%. They have a higher rate of abuse, they have a higher rate of infidelity, they have a higher rate of disappointment and dissatisfaction, living together doesn't prepare you for marriage, it prepares you for divorce, statistically. It also is a very unsafe environment for a young woman. Usually he moves into her house, usually she's more mature and responsible, usually she's paying the majority of the bills, and he's stronger than her, and she is not in the safest position mentally, physically, spiritually, or emotionally. In addition, if you live and sleep together before you get married, here's a few things that happen practically. Number one, is God going to put His hand on and bless that relationship? No. God's like, "If you wanna disobey Me, I'm not gonna help." So even if you say you're believers, you've immediately removed God from your relationship. Number two, as I said, if you're living and sleeping together, but not married, is the woman in a safe position? No, she's in a dangerous and vulnerable position. If you are living and sleeping together. Does the woman respect the man's leadership? No, no. He immediately loses all of his leadership credibility, because she doesn't respect him, because she knows that she could control and manipulate him. And a guy can't look at her and say, "Honey, you know what? We just need to change some things." She's like, "What are you talking about? Don't quote verses, we're sleeping together. Don't try to tell me that you're gonna lead, you're not following God, why would I follow you?" And so what happens is guys tend to think very short term, and they're like, "Well, I got a gal." Yeah, but you don't have a future. She doesn't feel safe with you, and she doesn't respect you. What happens as well, if you're living and sleeping together before marriage, you're not dealing with obvious issues, you're not going back to deal, like they did in Song of Songs, A, with here's trauma or attachment issues, or issues from the past, or bad relationships, or heartbreak, or my parents' marriage was a bad example, we got to reset some things. You're not dealing with any of that, because you're not dealing with reality. Like, well, we can't really deal with the important things, because we've sort of made something else. The only thing that really holds us together, and in addition, you're not connecting at the deepest level. The deepest level is not the body, it's the soul. Ask anybody who's been happily married for 50 years, their body doesn't look the same, but they feel closer because their souls are more connected. The DSM, the Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Health Disorders, it mentions the human soul zero times. Because the world in which we live only knows about the physical, knows nothing about the spiritual. This is why if you will pray together, if you will worship together, if you will serve God together, you will build your relationship on the deepest, strongest foundation. You add to that your friendship, and then you consummate your relationship, and you add the physical, but then the physical is in addition to the spiritual, and the emotional, and the mental, and the safety, and the spiritual connection. Because here's what I know, if you're sleeping together, you're not praying together, you're sleeping together, you're not worshiping together, you're sleeping together, you're not serving God together, you're just not. It's either a relationship with God, or a relationship that is without God, even if the people claim to be God's people. And what happens as well, if you're living or sleeping together before you get married, back to the brain science and back to the neural pathways, when you are together, if you are a believer, how do you feel? Shameful and guilty,

'cause the Holy Spirit convicts you. I dealt with this guy years ago, he's in his 20s. He's like, "I don't know what's wrong, I just feel guilty." And I said, "It's 'cause you're guilty." You know, it's like, "Well, I feel bad, you're bad, there's nothing wrong with you, like you have a functioning conscience, right? You know, you're bad, and you're doing wrong. So you feel bad about doing wrong. That's the Holy Spirit's way of saying, knock that off, do something different. And so what happens is, I'll give you our, here's our testimony, it's real romance, not perfect romance. So we were not virgins when we met, we started sleeping together, neither of us was walking with Jesus. Does that create some guilt, shame, bad habits and patterns? Yeah, so then we stopped sleeping together. We met with our pastor, we went through the premarital process, we did get married, and now we're together. How do we feel? Well, still early in the marriage, some guilt and shame. We're like, 'cause I'm doing the same things with the same person, and it used to be bad, and now it's good. The brain's all fried. Some people think, well, we'll get married, and that'll make it better. No, you've gotta heal from the guilt and shame of the past, otherwise you'll have the same feelings when ultimately you need a renewing of your mind, because now you're married. So how many of you'd like to know, I'll hit a few things in closing. How many of you'd like to know, okay, we'd like to get married or date, or we'd like to raise kids, and help them figure this out. Don't get legalistic on this, every generation has one stupid book for parents of little kids, and one stupid book for parents of adolescents, and every stupid book is, here's how you do it. And I'm telling you, those kids grow up and they're naughty. Okay, they're just naughty. So don't get legalistic about this, tools not rules, but this would be my recommendation. Start with the godly friendship. You're both believers serving God, you have the same friend group, you work together, you're in church, whatever the case, hey, you're nice, we're hanging out in group, get to know each other. If you're really young, then I would add intentional friendship, meaning intentional is "I really like you, and I hope there's a future with you, but we're so young, we're gonna have to be very patient here." So my oldest son, he came home at 14. Here's what he said, "Dad, I really met a nice girl." I was like, "Okay," here's literally what I, here's what I, I don't know, here's what I said. Probably shouldn't tell this, but came home, said, "Dad, I met a really nice girl." I said, "Yes," he's like, "What?" I was like, "It's a girl." You know, like, 'cause we lived in Seattle. I was like, yes, okay. So, but I was like, okay, so, but 14, is he ready to get engaged? No, he's not ready to drive, right? I was like, okay, I don't know if this is gonna be your wife. You know, I don't want to discourage your desires. Your desires are good, but you guys can be friends, and you can have an intentional friendship, but you guys are gonna need to be really patient, right? 'Cause nobody gets married at 15, unless you're in Kentucky. And we're not in Kentucky, so you're out. They got married at 21, and they've got a great marriage, and I'm super proud of 'em, and they're doing awesome. Very rarely do you meet your spouse super young, but some people do, and so then it's not just a friendship, it's an intentional friendship, we need to be really patient, we'll see what the Lord has. And then, so intentional dating is different than casual dating. Let me talk to the, it's called Beyonce. All the single ladies, all right, single ladies. So should a guy date one gal at a time, or a bunch of gals at a time? One. So you don't like "The Bachelor," "The Bachelorette?" Nope, okay. So should they have a hope that if they're going to date exclusively, that the goal would be to figure out whether or not maybe we should be married? Should that be the goal, or should there be no goal whatsoever? There should be a goal. A lot of guys are like, "Yeah, I'm dating seven women. Why, I don't know. I'm

like a dog chasing firetrucks, I have no idea why, and if I got one, I would not know what to do with it." Yeah, so, well that's not a plan, sir. So the goal is one person with the intent of, I'm looking forward to getting married, we're gonna see if this works out. Ladies, let me ask you this. Should he be determining whether or not you're gonna be his wife on the first date? No, some guys are two casual, who are like, "We're just gonna hang out and see what happens." Sin will happen, I know what's gonna happen. Other guys are way too intense, they're like, "Hi, my name's Tony, I want seven kids. How's your eggs," you know? So you're like, "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait a minute. My name's Sally, we gotta start, we gotta back it up," right? Guys aren't laughing. Guys are like, 'It's offensive. Only want six kids, he's lying.' Okay, so if you are intentionally dating, and you're like, "You know what, I like you, you like me, we like the Lord. Seems like we're getting along. Our friends and family think it's a good idea." Should you go to premarital counseling before you get married, yes or no? Yes, 'cause you have no idea what you're doing. You have no idea what you're doing, you have no, it's crazy. They make you take driver's ed. They're like, "Well, you're gonna hurt people. You should at least have a driver's ed class for marriage. You don't know what you're doing. Nobody knows what they're, so go to a premarital class. We have a great one here at the church. Find people that love the Lord, have been married for a long time, and they're honest with you, and just be honest with them and say, "Here's who we are, here's where we're at. What do you think?" And here's what they're gonna say. "Yes, you guys are great." Or "No, this is the worst idea ever." Or "You've got some stuff to work on, and if you're willing to work on it, we think you can get there." That's the point of the premarital process. In addition, then you get engaged. Engagement, how many of you ladies have been preparing for this moment your entire life? You guys just need to know this. You single guys, I'm way off my notes, but you're welcome. So here's what a guy, so a lady is, once you're together, she has got like 50 years sequenced, And the dude's like, "I don't know." She's like, "oh, you don't have to, I'll tell you." So, you know, that's how. I raised two daughters. Do you know when my daughters started preparing for marriage? Little, like they put on the dress, and they put on the veil, little princess, I'm like, oh my gosh, I just thought about this. I probably shouldn't share it, this is the downside of being my kid, I tell stories and I didn't ask. So the first time, I'll never forget one of my, we were at Disney World, one of my daughters was little. I took her swimming at night, and we're having fun, and come back, and I put her on the bed, and I take the white towel, and I put it over her head, and I'm cleaning her hair, and she grabs the towel, the white towel, like a veil. And she looks at me, she said, "Daddy, will you marry me?" I lost it. I was like, "She's thinking about this." And I said, "No, honey, you can't marry your daddy, but someday you're gonna get married to a wonderful man." True story. She asked, how will I know? I said, I'll tell you.

- Yeah.

- Amen.

- Yeah. And it worked out great. Okay, so I never had that conversation with a son. I never had a little boy, "What are you thinking about?" "My honeymoon," never had that. "What are you thinking about?" "Trucks and guns," you know, that's all they're ever thinking about. And so by

the time you get to engagement, this is really something that the guy is just sort of arriving at, but the gal has been working on since preschool, right? Engagement, and then what? Marriage, living together? No, sleeping together? No, married? Yes, yes. Now statistically, I'll share this. Couples that don't live, and sleep together, and get married have the lowest abuse rates, lowest adultery rates. They have the highest marital satisfaction rates. This is actually a report on that great alt-right site, WebMD, you know, and so what happens is God's way still works. And statistically, they would tell you people who get married young, they don't have good marriages. There is one exception. If they're both Bible-believing Christians, and they marry young, rather than having a lot of dating, relating and fornicating, they actually enjoy marriage, and they have a more satisfying, and longer enduring marriage. And if you wanna read a good book, "The Right One" by Jimmy Evans is the best. I will close with this, and I'm over time. Number four, so number one, back to the future. Number two, the success sequence. Number three, where is the line versus when is the time? And number four links in the family chain. So Jesus says this, Matthew 22:32 says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." These are three generations of a family. So ultimately the goal is for you to ask, "So where am I in the chain? And what kind of chain or legacy do I want to leave in the future?" I've been using this analogy for decades. So in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who's the first link in the chain? Abraham, he's the first believer in his family. His dad's an unbeliever, so he's the first. Some of you, you're the first link in the chain. You're like, I'm the first believer in the family, like I got to learn everything, 'cause we didn't get anything right? We didn't know Jesus, okay?" And then there are strong links in the chain, and that is maybe your grandparents or your parents know and love the Lord, and you love the Lord. In Abraham, Isaac would be the strong link in the chain. Grace's dad was a pastor. Grace's mom is awesome, I love her. My parents love Jesus, I talked to 'em this week. Marky, it's always Marky. I'm gonna be 65 and Marky. And I called my folks and they're like, "We've been praying for you and God laid this honor." I'm like, great, my parents love the Lord. And so I wanna be a strong link in the chain. I'm not the first link in the chain. We want our kids to be strong links in the chain. In addition, there are sometimes weak links in the chain. These are people who would profess a faith that they're not really practicing. These would be like the prodigals. You're like, "Well they say they love the Lord, but I don't know they got baptized when they were a kid. Or you know, they gave their life to the Lord at camp. But man, I don't know man, they're not living for the Lord. They're not walking with the Lord. They're not making good decisions. This is weak, this could break." And then there were broken links in the chain, and it is maybe your parents knew the Lord, or your grandparents knew the Lord, but you have denied that faith. This is a whole generation of deconstructionist and woke progressives. We're gonna deal with them in Elijah next week. And ultimately what this is, is this is taking all the grace that God has given your family, and then just absolutely severing yourself from it, and severing your kids from it. And it's tragic, and it is catastrophic, and it is right now epidemic. And so what I would say is, when it comes to your marriage, first and foremost, what about your grandparents? What about your parents? First, strong, weak or broken link. For you and your spouse, or spouse-to-be, each of you, first, strong, weak, or broken link. And then what kind of legacy do you wanna live for your kids? And I would say this as well, oftentimes people are like, "Well, we can get married. We're both believers." If they are a very weak link in the midst of breaking, marriage isn't gonna help. So how did it go, what'd you think on this one? Thumbs up,

thumbs down, thumbs sideways. Okay either way. Felt like a lot. All right, Grace, you wanna come up and do a Q&A? Grace has got question. So what I do, I say crazy things, and then Grace comes up, and she does great. So, and thank you babe for doing this. I know your favorite thing is to answer sex questions in public at church. So you're welcome.

- Well thank you for, woops. Thank you for working, and working hard, and showing that to our kids, so we could have the success sequence going early.

- The kids are all doing way better than we did at their age. They're stronger, and healthier, and have better momentum.

- Yeah.

- So ladies, do not date, sleep with, or marry this guy, by the theory of-

- Could we put his photo up, please, we have his photo.

- By the theory of no premarital sex, if someone never gets married, they should die a virgin? is marriage a bribe to be able to have sex. Anyway, yeah. no respect for women whatsoever. Bad guy. And the fact that he's asking this question, and probably doesn't even know it's a bad question is even worse. So I know you have a few words for him.

- Yeah, no. First of all, his attitude is a form of birth control. So that's good. So, but there are, let's just be honest with the guys. So guys, the guys want sex, yes or no? Yes, do they want marriage? Hmm. That's the issue. And so yes, sex is an incentive for a man to pursue marriage. It's not the only incentive, it's not the only motivation. But if a guy's like, "Well, I can't be single." Like, well you're gonna need to get married, and so you need to then grow up, and you need to stop being selfish, and you need to get a job, and you need to be responsible, and you need to have character, and you need to make a woman know that she's gonna be safe, so that she can be intimate with you. Gus's like, "Ah, that's a lot." It's like, well, yeah, but that's because God doesn't, you may love sex, but God loves her. And if all you want is sex from her, what you're doing is you're using and, or abusing one of God's daughters. And where God dealt with me very sternly early in our marriage, I was having, you know, I was being selfish, and you know that one time, I was selfish, and I remember I was kind of complaining to the Lord. And I remember the Lord rebuked me. He said, "Mark, before she was your wife, she was my daughter." I was like, "Oh, that's right. I'm dealing with His daughter," and so I need to see you first as His daughter, and then as my wife. Otherwise I'm not going to have the mindset, or the perspective that the Father would have regarding His daughter, and now that I'm a dad with daughters. Like when you're a single guy, you're like, "I don't know." When you're a dad, you're like, "Oh, I know, I know for sure." And you see it very differently 'cause you're like, "That's my daughter, I adore her, I want to protect her. I want her to be blessed, and strong, and healthy, and encouraged, and someday for her to have a guy who takes at least as good of care of her as I do. And so, you know, any guy who has this mindset, he's sadly the majority, 'cause most

guys are idiots until they meet Jesus, and kind of get a cranial rectal extraction moment. And then, and then it's starting to see that she's your sister in Christ, and starting to see that she's God's daughter, and you know, a guy like this, if he grew up with a sister, he really wasn't paying attention, and he doesn't have the heart that a man should have toward young women.

- Yeah, or toward God obviously, he calls no sex before marriage a theory, which it's not.

- No, it's a command.

- It's been tested, and it doesn't play the other way.

- God's not like, "I'm gonna give you the 10 theories here on this stone plate." No., it's not a theory, it's a command, and it's not a theory that we're supposed to argue with. It's a command that we're supposed to obey. And so he asked the question, what was the question? I got so angry, I forgot the question.

- So is sex like a ploy to get-

- No, but he say you should die a virgin.

- Uh-huh, yeah.

- Yeah. And you're not gonna die of it, you know? "The COVID didn't get me, but the chastity did. So I blew up, I exploded, I just died." So, so, and just so you guys know, I worship a virgin.

- Yeah.

- I got awkward and quiet. So Jesus, He comes to the earth. Did He ever have sex?

- No.

- No, did He live a perfect life? Yes, did He live a significant life?

- Yes.

- Yes, He did. And so you can have a great life, and a significant life, and die a virgin, Paul, Jeremiah, Jesus, all single. Right, and I mean they were sad a lot. They died young, there's that. But, so let's do this since we have a few minutes. So Jesus did die of virgin. He's still a virgin. What do you think it would've been like to be married to Jesus had He gotten married?

- I have no idea.

- How could you not know you're married to me? That's amazing.

- I have no idea.
- No, I mean, it would've been hard, because He never would've sinned, and the wife would've always been wrong.
- Yeah, she's like, "I'm upset." He is like, "I forgive you." You know, so, but yeah, I mean He, but the thing with Jesus, why did He not get married? Marriage would've benefited Him, but He came to benefit us, and so he lives without sin, He endures, The Bible says, all the temptation that we do. And even in an instance, Satan showed Him every desire that we've all ever had. And he said no to it because He wanted to honor the Father, and He wanted to be our Savior. And so a lot of guys like, well if you wanna be like Jesus, you're probably gonna be more of a servant, less selfish. And you're gonna do what's best for others, not just what's most pleasurable or convenient for you. And so a guy like this, I'd be like, you just, you don't think like Jesus, 'cause Jesus didn't come to the earth asking, "What can I take?" He came to the Earth and asked, "What can I give and how can I help?"
- And He treated women as sisters. I mean, think of all the women He healed and He comforted, and there wasn't any kind of, you know, romantic relationship with them. But there was a deep, profound care and love for them, and even like the woman caught in adultery, the woman, well Mary, you know all the women around Him.
- Mary and Martha, His dear friends.
- Yeah, yeah, I mean, just, He treated them as sisters. They felt safe around Him.
- And they were safe around Him. He never used or abused His position or authority in any negative way, and so really, for a man to be like Jesus means that you're the safest person, and you're the most helpful person when you're in the presence of a single, or young woman. She's safe, she's protected, 'cause the guy that's there is not a predator, he is a brother, and he's got the brother eyes on. He's like, "How do I love and protect my sister?" All right.
- All right, dear Lord, thank You so much that You did set a perfect example for these young men. And you did work a job as well, and you protected women, and treated them kindly, and lovingly, Lord, and You talked to us about marriage in the Bible, because You want to instruct us in what that should look like. So, Lord, I pray that we would not just think of Your Word as a theory or a suggestion, but that we would be obedient to it, knowing that that's the best way, that's the safest way, that's the most joyful way to live our lives according to what You have for us, and how You designed us. So, Lord, I pray over these singles, I pray over these marriages that maybe didn't start out right, that You would just give them a redo, and that they would renew their minds, and think differently about each other, and honor one another by honoring You first. In Jesus' name, Amen.

- Amen, thanks babe.