

Preparing for Marriage 1 of 8

That Your Joy May Be Full

#0050

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 27, 1969

Our opening text this evening will be found in John 15:11. I want you to notice what the purpose of the Lord's instruction is—why God tells us something:

“These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” John 15:11.

Why does God tell us things? So that we'll have what? Joy. How much? Full. Isn't that wonderful? Well, if we're full of joy, then we're joyful. Is that right?

As the result of studying these wonderful principles, we'll have more joy. And you can. No matter how much you have, you can have more, for your heart can expand and get bigger. If you can hold a quart tonight, the day will come when you can hold two quarts, and on and on.

Now, with this, I'd like to put this statement from *the Ministry of Healing*, page 363. Just one short sentence:

“The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life's problems”
Ministry of Healing, page 363.

Are there any problems in the world today? Are there? Ah, I run into them all the time. The world is full of problems. And a lot of them are concerned with this question of marriage and the home. The fact that one marriage in every four ends in the divorce courts, in some parts of the country, one marriage in every three ends in divorce courts, that fact is eloquent on this point. That is, that there are not so many happy homes.

But remember our statement here:

“The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life's problems” *Ibid.*

The wisdom of this world makes things more and more complex. Let me illustrate that. Some years ago, the wisdom of man found out a way to take the wheat berry and separate the bran, and the shorts, and the middling, and the germ, and give us the beautiful white product—white flour.

Well, it was only a matter of time until certain problems began to arise, all sorts of symptoms. What was the answer? Well, the simple answer would be for everybody to go back to doing what? Eating whole wheat bread. That would be the simple answer, but that's too simple for this sophisticated modern age. And so,

through the decades, all sorts of things have been invented and prepared to keep adding to and enriching that white flour.

As I sometimes say to audiences when I'm giving a series of health lectures, if a man stole \$10 out of your pocket and gave you five or six back, would you say he had *enriched* you? The fact is, dear friends, that no matter how many chemicals they add to that white flour, they never quite get it back to the superior quality of what God put into the wheat berry when He made it, and they never will.

And so I might go on with many other illustrations. But remember:

"The gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life's problems" *Ibid*.

The way to find the best answer to any problem, the way to find the best plan concerning anything in life, is to go back to God's original creation.

Now, when we go back to Genesis the first chapter, we find the home. You know, it's an interesting thing that when God had made this world in the six days, filled it with plant and animal life, and then made man—the last thing He did before He rested and made the Sabbath—the first thing He did in the life of man was to create the institution of the home. Everything else was preparatory to that, but when this was done, everything was completed. Read the story there in Genesis 1 and 2. And this is included in that wonderful statement in Genesis:

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good..." Genesis 1:31.

Then is the *home* very good? Oh yes.

Now to show that the home is a direct and deliberate creation of God, we note in the second chapter of Genesis that when Adam was created, he was given dominion over all the earth. And then, as he looked upon the whole creation, God arranged for him to feel his need of a companion. And the record here, Genesis 2:21–22, is that the Lord caused Adam to sleep, and took one of his ribs and from it made the woman. Notice the 22nd verse:

"And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man" Genesis 2:22.

Who was it, then, that arranged that first marriage? Why, it was the Lord who made it.

That was the beginning of human history. Let's come down now 4,000 years later. Turn to the gospel of John, the second chapter of the Gospel of John. Here we find the Lord Jesus beginning His public ministry. And He begins it where? In Cana of Galilee at a marriage ceremony. There was a divine purpose in this—Jesus had come to this world to restore man to the original perfection, and He began His work by performing a miracle of love and mercy here at this wedding feast.

I want to notice a comment on this in the book *Adventist Home*, page 28. This is a beautiful statement:

“The presence of Christ alone can make men and women happy” *Adventist Home*, page 28.

What does it take to make people happy? It takes the presence of Christ.

"All the common waters of life Christ can turn into the wine of heaven. The home then becomes as an Eden of bliss, the family, a beautiful symbol of the family in heaven" *Ibid*.

Isn't that beautiful? "Ah but," somebody says, "That's poetry. That's just something to sing about. But when you get down to the actual living of life, it isn't quite that pretty."

I want to tell you something, friends, and I know what I'm talking about: A Christian home can be happier than anything that can ever be written about. It can be more wonderful, more blessed, more a fountain of joy, a haven of rest, a heaven on earth, far more than anything that can be written about.

Somebody says, "Brother Frazee, you're dreaming."

No, I have a vision. And it's an *inspired* vision. It comes from the Word of God. The problem is simply this, friends: that few people are allowing the Architect of the universe to plan their homes.

Every building needs a blueprint—the better the architect, the better the plan. Do you agree with me? And let me tell you something, friends: if it weren't so tragic, it would be plain laughable how people who have never had a Christian home, never been married, know so much about what they're going to do and how to do it, so much that they want no one, much less God, to direct and plan for them. I say, if it weren't so tragic, it would be plain laughable.

This is a road that most of us go over only once. And therefore, any planning that is done for it in advance needs to be done by someone who *knows* the road. And you and I do not know the road in advance—only God does. He has promised to guide those who want His guidance. The problem is, as I say, that so few are seeking divine guidance.

In *Volume 4* of the *Testimonies*, page 504, I read this challenging statement:

“There is not one marriage in one hundred that results happily, that bears the sanction of God, and places the parties in a position better to glorify Him” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, page 504.

We started out with a verse where Jesus says that He's told us these things in order that we may be what? Joyful, happy. But of course, if we don't listen, then we won't be happy. And there isn't one marriage in a hundred that results happily.

Then I ask you, friends, let's face reality right here at the beginning of the first class of this series: If the plan that I give you in this class in the Christian home, Preparing for Marriage, is like what most people are following, will it bring you happiness? Not according to this, because there isn't one marriage in a hundred that result happily.

Let's turn that thing around. If I give you the right plan, the *divine* plan, *God's* plan, then if you look around you, what percent of people will you find *following* the plan that I'm presenting to you? If I am giving you the right plan, what percentage of the people will you find following it? Less than one percent. Now, why do I present that to you? So that when we study these things that we're going to study, you won't expect to hear something that is ordinarily done. I'll just be honest with you, friends. You're going to hear some things in this class and you're going to say, "Who ever heard of such a thing?" Well, a lot of people never *have* heard. That's the problem. That's why there're so few happy homes.

But I know that the things we're going to study in this class will make happy homes; I have no question about that. In the first place, I know it because it's from the Word of God and the testimonies of His Spirit. In the second place, I've been working with people on these principles now for over 40 years, and I've seen them work out in human lives. And friends, I know by personal experience, by the observation of the experience of others, as well as by the Word of the living God, that these principles work when people accept them.

But please don't expect to bring in some ham stew and then put in a little tincture of soybeans and call that a good dish. No. New wine must be put into new bottles. If you try to take the principles we're going to study in this class and mix them with what is ordinarily done today, you'll have a mixture that'll have just enough of reform in it to make you look ridiculous to a lot of people, but not enough to get the happy results that are the aim of God in it.

In the book *Messages to Young People*, we have a clear statement of what's happening today. (I've invited you to bring these two books, *Messages to Young People* and *Adventist Home* to the class, also your Bible and notebook.) If you have *Messages to Young People*, look at the bottom of page 450, seven lines up from the bottom:

"Courtship, as carried on in this age, is a scheme of deception and hypocrisy, with which the enemy of souls has far more to do than the Lord" *Messages to Young People*, page 450.

Who's running most of the courtships today? The Devil. And if this was true when it was written in 1886, I don't think I will need to spend much time proving that it must be even more so now, for the batting average on happy homes is less today than it has ever been. The divorce court's statistics show that.

What's the problem? The problem is that the Devil is running most of the courtships in the world today. What is his *purpose* in that? You'll find the answer to that on page 455, the bottom of the page:

“Satan is busily engaged in influencing those who are wholly unsuited to each other to unite their interests. He exults in this work, for by it he can produce more misery and hopeless woe to the human family than by exercising his skill in any other direction” *Ibid.*, page 455.

Why does the Devil spend so much time on the courtship and marriage question? Because he knows that's the way he can make more people more unhappy than any other way. But I'd like to look at the other side of that coin. Then if you and I will spend some time on *God's* instructions on this, we can get at the plan and the way to make many people happier than anything else we can do to help them.

Do you see why I'm interested in this?

“Satan is busily engaged in influencing those who are wholly unsuited to each other to unite their interests” *Ibid.*

Do you know what the Devil is doing right now, right this minute, while I'm reading? The Devil is bending over and whispering in the ear of some married person here, “That's your problem. You're married to the wrong person.” That's right; that's what the Devil is doing. I'm somewhat acquainted with the fellow, and I know how he operates. But I have covered that in a class that I conducted a few weeks ago for husbands and wives. And you married couples, who took that class, know that we met that head-on. We read a clear statement from the inspired sources that even though a person's marriage has been led by the enemy, when they're married, they should do what? Make the best of it.

But this class that I'm giving now is not for the purpose of telling married people how to make a success of what they already have. I've already had that class. Any of you that missed it, you can get the tapes on it.

Let me tell you a little experience I had over 1,000 miles away from here just a few days ago. A man sat down to talk with me and began to tell me his problems and his story. He and his wife have been married for 20 or 25 years. They have three lovely children, some in academy and college, but their home is breaking up. It's too common a story these days.

And the tears were in his eyes and voice as he told me about it. I said, “Brother, I'm so happy I've got something to help you.” I told him about the class that I had just conducted out here at Eden Valley. I told him how he could get the tapes. I said, “You and your wife sit down together for eight one-hour lessons and follow that instruction, and you'll have a happy home.” And I can tell that to any married couple, friends.

So as we go into these classes on preparing for marriage, how to lay the foundations of a Christian home, remember, if you're already married, your purpose in listening to these classes should be twofold. First, so that you can be wise counselors to your own children and to others, and help them to do the thing right when it's time for them to engage in courtship and marriage. Second and this is even more important, (and don't miss this, every one of you *married* couples!) remember, if you didn't learn how to spell in the first grade, you'd better learn in the

second grade. Is that right? And if there's some word you missed in the second grade, you surely don't want to misspell that word all the rest of your life just because you managed to get out of the second grade into the third grade without learning to spell that word. Am I correct? No matter how old you are, it isn't too late to learn to spell.

My point is, my dear friends, if your courtship wasn't carried on in harmony with the Word of God and the testimonies of His Spirit, it's true, it's too late now to go back and do it over again, but it's not too late to learn how you should have done it.

Let me tell you, God is looking for people who are willing to go back and learn how things ought to be done. And merely because God, in His mercy, took you where you were and had pity on you and has given you a Christian home when you didn't know these principles, I say merely because He took pity on you, don't be presumptuous because of that. Don't say, "Oh well, we didn't do so bad, and we didn't follow all these rules and principles."

Listen, God has mercy on people who don't know anything about the Sabbath and break the seventh-day every week. Doesn't He, if they don't know any better? But listen, when they come to the light, what does God want them to do? Walk in that light, repent of their past transgressions, and keep the Sabbath holy.

So, these principles that we're going to study—in how to get ready to build a successful Christian home—are just as important for people who are married already to study, to learn, and understand as for people that aren't married yet, for the reasons that I've given.

Now back to the original creation. Let me ask you again: Who was it that established the institution of the home? God did. Who was it that united Adam and Eve in marriage? God did. And that same dear Lord, 4,000 years later, performed His first miracle at the wedding feast of Cana to show His regard for, and His interest in, this very important institution.

Now turn, please, to the book of Proverbs, and we'll want to notice a couple of texts here, just across the page from each other. Proverbs 19:14, Proverbs 18:22. The last part of the 14th verse in Proverbs 19:

"...a prudent wife is from the Lord" Proverbs 19:14.

Where does a man get a good wife? From the Lord. Again Proverbs 18:22:

"Whoso findeth a wife..." Proverbs 18:22.

As *Ministry of Healing* puts this, "Whoso findeth such a wife" (that is the right kind):

"...findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the LORD"
Proverbs 18:22.

In each of these verses, notice that the right wife, the good wife, comes from whom? From the Lord.

All right, now I want to ask you a question or two on that, as you look at the text. If a prudent wife, a good wife, the right wife is from the Lord, who does she belong to? Wouldn't she have to belong to the Lord if the Lord gave her away? Wouldn't she? Could the Lord give a wife to a man if the wife was not in the hands of the Lord to give away? Then, if a girl wishes to have a Christian home, who should she give herself to? The Lord. That's right.

You see, girls, you can't manage this; the Lord will have to manage it. The Lord is the only One who knows the one that you can best be happy with.

Somebody says, "Well, I already know."

No, I don't know whether you do or not. You may change your mind six weeks from now. But if you will put yourself in the Lord's hands fully, completely, then you will be, as it were, ready for the Lord to give you away when *He* gets ready.

You know, there's hardly any girl who does that. Most girls today are out hunting a husband. That's treacherous business, friends. The girl who hunts a husband quite often gets one worthy of her quest. A true Christian girl who understands these principles that I'm going to study, is not *hunting* a husband.

Oh, somebody says, "Brother Frazee, what are you talking about?"

Well, I already warned you that we're going to study things in this class that are clear out of fashion and out of custom. But remember, the way things are going today, how many marriages result happily? Less than one percent. So don't be surprised if we throw most of what's happening in the garbage can where it belongs.

No. We're dealing with a way of courtship and marriage in this class, which is fundamentally different from what you see going on in the world today, and even in religious circles. Fundamentally different. We're going to get our principles straight from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, inspired sources. And we're going to build, step by step, a ladder of success. But every step must be laid solid.

Our first principle that we want to get clear here is that it's God that's running this business for those that let Him.

"...a prudent wife is from the Lord" Proverbs 19:14.

"Whoso findeth [such] a wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord" Proverbs 18:22.

I addressed a question to the young women. Now I want to address a question to the young men. My dear young friend, if you want a happy home, a Christian home, a successful home, where will you go to find your wife? Where will you go, according to these verses? To the Lord. That's good. Don't be afraid to answer. This is a class, not a sermon.

You would readily agree with me that you'd hardly expect to go to the dance hall hunting for her if you had asked the Lord to give you a wife. You agree with me on that point, don't you? There are a lot of other places that you wouldn't go. The Devil has many variations of the dance hall today. In some places, people are afraid of a dance hall unless there are wheels on the shoes of the people that dance. If there are wheels, then it's all right. So there are many variations of these things.

But now, back to our basic point. Who's in the business of guiding people together to establish a successful Christian home? Who's in that business? The Lord is.

We also found somebody else that's in the business of guiding people together. Who was that we read about? Satan. He is *busily* engaged. Now, notice the difference. We read there in *Messages to Young People* that the Devil is in the business of guiding people together that don't *fit* together; they're not well matched. They don't make each other happy; they make each other miserable. I wonder how the Devil is so successful at getting 99 out of 100 marriages on his plan.

You know if the Devil was to walk up to a young man and say, "If you just follow me, I'll succeed in making you miserable the rest of your life," he wouldn't fool people, would he? No. And if the Devil were to walk up to a girl and say, "Now, listen, if you just let me, I'll so arrange things that you will get married to a man that you'll *never* be able to be fully happy with," would she listen? No.

Do you see there must be a *deception* about this thing? There must be an enchantment, a bewitching influence. This is exactly what happens in conventional courtship. In conventional courtship, people "fall" in love.

"Well," somebody says, "sure, that's what's happening all the time, people are falling in love." Indeed it's happening all the time. But I want to tell you something, friends, you can never fall *up*, can you?

Oh, somebody says, "I think it's *wonderful* to fall in love." But many a person, who falls in love, a few years later, perhaps even a few months, would give so much to get hold of a rope that would drag them up and out of what they fell in to. That's right.

The love we are studying about, people don't *fall* into it at all. They *climb* the steps. Take your *Adventist Home* now, turn to page 49, and you'll see what I mean:

"Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God" *The Adventist Home*, page 49.

Here it speaks of steps toward a marriage alliance. I want to study some of those steps with you. We're beginning tonight; we'll have some more tomorrow night, and next weekend, and so on. In fact, that's the great purpose of this class—to study these steps. There are a series of steps that guide the Christian in his advancement toward a successful, happy home.

Now this says, “let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by” these different things. What does that expression “every step” indicate, as far as the number of steps? There’s more than one. You see that, don’t you? And indeed there are to be a number of steps. I want to study with you what some of those steps are.

But each step is to be characterized by, what’s the first word? Modesty. The second? Simplicity. And the third? Sincerity. And the fourth? An earnest purpose to please and honor God.

Modesty. Every step toward marriage is to be characterized by modesty. That’s one of the reasons that I spoke to the young women that they are not to be on the counter out there to attract attention. They’re not for sale; the Christian girl is not for sale, not at all. She’s modest, she’s reserved, she has to be *sought*; she’s not out hunting. Every step is to be characterized by modesty, simplicity, and sincerity.

I want to ask you something, friends: Don’t you think that it would save a lot of heartaches and broken hearts? Oh, I know that it would take some of the exciting romance out of life. But don’t you think that it would prevent a lot of broken hearts if every step toward a marriage alliance was characterized by simplicity and sincerity?

The way it’s carried on in the world, a young woman doesn’t know for *sure*, when a young man is dating her, whether he has any serious purpose or not. In fact, we hear the expression every now and then about some couple, “Looks like they’re getting serious.”

I tell you, in this class, the time to get serious is before the first date. That’s right. We’re going to study it right out of the books. And if this sounds impossible, impractical, unworkable, don’t forget the statistics: 99 out of 100 marriages today result in what? Unhappiness. We’re studying a plan that will give true success every time. I know it, no question about it.

But we will never arrive at that goal by the scheming, deceptive hypocrisy so characteristic of conventional courtships.

Every step... [is to] be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God”
Ibid.

Then, a *Christian* young man, (watch this point!) before he ever has his first date with *any* young woman, is seeking the counsel of whom? Of God. Tell me, if he is seeking the counsel of God, will he allow himself to even consider a date with a young woman that he wouldn’t consider marrying? I leave that question with you to think about. It would save a lot of heartaches.

The same with a Christian girl. Will a Christian girl accept a date from a young man that she wouldn’t even think of marrying? Why *should* she? What’s the purpose of the date?

“Oh,” somebody says, “That’s the way to have a good time.”

That brings me to one of the biggest questions that I want to ask in this class tonight. What is this whole matter of the relationship between men and women for? Is it for fun, or is it for the sacred institution of marriage? Which is it for?

“Ah,” somebody says, “Both.”

Oh, no, not both, friends, not both, because they lead in different directions. If the purpose of association of young people in their teens and twenties or at any other age is merely for fun, then the world is madly pursuing its goal today and giving us a frightening exhibition of what that philosophy leads to. I submit to you, my dear friends, the purpose of the ties and attractions between man and woman are not primarily for fun at all. They’re not for fun. They’re for something very sacred, very holy.

Let’s go to the 19th chapter of Matthew. The Pharisees had come asking Jesus some questions about divorce and marriage. He took them back to the beginning:

“...Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh?” Matthew 19:4–5.

What does "twain" mean? Two. All right. Then God takes two people, one man and one woman, and joins them in marriage. How many? How many were they? Two. How many are they now? One.

Then Jesus goes on to say that anything apart from that is a breaking of the Seventh Commandment. In the Seventh Commandment, the law of God declares:

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” Exodus 20:14.

Adultery is the bringing in of any third party into this relationship. Now, somebody says, “Oh, that’s talking about *married* people.” I want to tell you, friends, the Seventh Commandment is just as much for single people as it is for married people. Until a young man has demonstrated full obedience to the Seventh Commandment, single, he’s not *ready* to be married, and so with a young woman.

Let’s face it. The wedding day has come. The bride and the groom stand there before the minister, and the question is put to that young man: “Will you, John Jones, take this woman, Mary Smith, to be your wedded wife, to live with her after God’s ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, honor her, cherish her, and, forsaking all others, keep you only unto her as long as you both shall live?”

There’s many a young man if he were really honest, would have to say something like this. Of course, this has never happened; I just say it would *have* to happen if we were dealing with realities instead of forms and ceremonies. That young man would have to say to the minister: “Preacher, what is this you’re asking me? You’re asking me to promise that I’m never to look at another girl again?

Never to make love to another girl? That I'm supposed to keep this one as long as we both shall live and keep myself only unto *her*—my eyes, my hands, my thoughts, my heart, my body—all just for her and her alone? Preacher, isn't that asking a lot?"

The preacher would have to say, if he stuck with the Word of God, "Yes, it's asking a lot—it's asking *everything!*"

Then, the young man, if he were really honest, would have to conclude the dialogue by saying: "Preacher, to tell you the truth, I don't know whether I could promise that and keep it or not; I've never tried. Since I was a teenager and all the way through, I've run with whoever I have felt like if I could get them. I've put my hands where I pleased if the other party permitted it. I've run first with this one and that one, and sometimes with several at once, and now you're asking me to leave all that and keep myself only unto this girl? I don't know, preacher, whether I can do it or not."

That would be really honest, wouldn't it? As I say, that never happened. But oh, my dear friend, if you really want a happy home, a successful home, a Christian home, you'll have to start keeping the Seventh Commandment when you're a child. You'll have to start guarding your affections and controlling your affections and passions and not letting your thoughts run after this one and that one, and this one and that one, and this one and that one, and your body follow suit. Oh, no, that won't do.

Do you see, friends, that there's quite a bit to this preparation for marriage?

Now, in my lesson tomorrow evening, I'm going to study with you how to make a success of childhood and adolescence, in order to get ready for a successful marriage.

Shall we stand and be dismissed.

Heavenly Father, as we study the references that we've looked at this evening, as we read these wonderful statements again in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, rightly interpret to our hearts these beautiful things.

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