

Preparing for Marriage 2 of 8

Love and Self-control

#0051

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

Our first text this evening is found in Luke 6:47–49. Here are the closing words of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In this, He gives us the program for successful home building:

“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock... But he that heareth, and doeth not is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great” Luke 6:47–49.

How many broken homes there are today, and the greatest reason is that they lack a foundation.

This is what I want to study with you tonight: the foundation of the successful Christian home. And this foundation the Lord intends to be built during infancy, childhood and adolescence. From the time the child is born, in a sense, even before it's born, then all through those years in the home, through the teen years, a foundation is being built. I say it is being built if the proper plan is being followed.

Now, at first thought, it might seem strange that it takes 20 years and more, to lay the foundation for a successful home. But think of what we're dealing with. We're dealing with the greatest institution in the world, my friends, the Christian home.

Someone was telling me about a man who was watching a work of excavation going on in one of our great cities. And as he stood there talking to the superintendent, he said, “What are you doing here?”

“Well,” he said, “We're getting ready to put up a tall building.”

“Well,” he said, “Why are you going down so deep?”

His answer was, “Because we are going up so high.”

And this is it. If you want to reach the heights of possibility in a successful Christian home, Jesus says in the verse we read, that the successful man digs deep and lays his foundation on a rock.

The biggest reason some of you are taking this class is because you have children. They may be infants in arms. They may be older children. But you, parents, have a great burden, and rightly so, to see your children succeed in everything in life. And, except for the decision to follow Christ, there is no decision that affects the total lifetime of a person, more than the decision of life companionship. As we shall see tonight, God lays upon parents the great responsibility in the matter of who their children are married to.

This is old fashioned, in fact, it's as old fashioned as the Bible, as Enoch, Methuselah, and all the great patriarchs, but, like everything else that comes from God, it doesn't go out of date. It may go out of style, as far as the world is concerned, but we're not interested in the world's way. We, I'm sure, have seen enough of it that we are not very pleased with its results. We want something different, something better. And this we get from God.

Let us think, for a few moments, of why this is so important, and what it is that enters into this foundation before any of these steps are taken up the ladder, or series of steps that lead, at last, to marriage. What are the things that must be built into the foundation?

I think we're all clear, as we remember our study of last night that a successful Christian home calls for two great things. One is love and the other is self-control. Now, really, these are two sides of the same coin. And just as there never was a coin so thin that it only had one side, so love has the two sides.

Let me illustrate what I mean. We were studying the Seventh Commandment last night:

"Thou should not commit adultery" Exodus 20:14.

This is the negative side of the coin. The positive side is thou shalt love thy wife exclusively; thou shalt love thy husband exclusively. That's the positive side of it. The negative side tells us what not to do. That calls for self-control. The more love one has, the easier it is to exercise self-control. What the world calls love is selfishness, and control of any kind *irks* selfishness.

This is why there is so much rebellion in the world today—a crying out against restraint of any kind in the home, in the school, in the government, in the church. This is an age of rebellion. The world has never seen the equal of this generation. And dear children and young people, God is calling you to be signs and wonders in this generation. He's calling you to be examples of love and obedience, cooperation and all that.

This—and oh, I wish I had an hour to spend just on this one point—is not something to be endured while you go through infancy and childhood and as long as you can stand it, in the teenage years. Oh, no. The purpose of God in teaching

children these lessons of love and self-control is that they may practice them all the rest of their lives. That's the purpose.

So the period that we spend in the home is not like a term that an inmate puts in at the penitentiary. He knows he has to be behind bars for so many years, but he counts the days until he gets out, maybe with time off, for good behavior. Nothing remotely like this is to be the attitude of children and young people in the home.

But do you recognize with me that there are very few children and young people today that are happy in the restraint of a home? Isn't that correct? Very few children are actually enjoying a happy fellowship in obedience and cooperation with their parents.

Let's follow that a step further. Do you know one of the greatest reasons that is urging teenagers and people in their early 20s, to marriage, in many cases, prematurely? It's to get out of a situation that they regard as intolerable in the home. They want to get out of the nest they're in. Why? "Well, I can't do as I please. So if I can get out and get a home of my own, then I can do as I please."

But, my dear friends, no lesson is more fundamental in successful Christian home building than this: until we have learned to be successful in the home where providence has placed us as minors, we can never hope, rightfully, to be successful in a home in which we are majors.

Turn to Luke the 16th chapter, please. And let us read here in plain words the principle that we have just stated:

"And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Luke 16:12.

You were born into a home or adopted into a home, or in God's providence, in some other way, you were placed in the care of someone. Usually, it's by birth. You are, in a sense, in someone else's home. Now, if you hadn't been faithful in that, Jesus says, who will give you that which is your own?

Well, I'll tell you who will give it to you. If you haven't been faithful in that which is another man's, the Devil will. He'll try to give you something that you think is your own. But Jesus plainly tells us here that if we haven't been faithful in that which is another man's, we won't make a success of our own.

This leads me to this point. The reason many children and young people growing up today have such a hard time with these problems we're studying, is that their parents, before them, grew up in homes where there was a lack, both of love and self-control.

"Well," somebody says, "Then what are we going to do about it?"

I just say to each of you right where you are, at whatever age you are, whether you are eight years old or 16 or 21 or 30 or 40 or 50 or 60, wherever you

are, you can begin right where you are, to learn whatever lessons along these lines you haven't yet learned—the double lesson of love and self-control.

If you now are parents, and you didn't learn these lessons when you were 3 years old or 10 or 16, learn them now. It isn't too late. It may come harder now, but you must learn them now, because how can you teach these lessons to your children, unless you know them? And how will they make a success as they ought to, in this wonderful institution of a Christian home, if in the providence of God they are called upon to establish one, unless they learn these lessons?

Turn, please, to the last page of the book *Messages to Young People*, and you will see where I get the inspiration for emphasizing this important principle; the second sentence in the last paragraph. This is taken, by the way, from that wonderful volume, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, in the chapter on the marriage of Isaac:

“It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own”
Messages to Young People, page 466.

I wish you'd memorize this sentence, be prepared to recite it. Will you read it with me now?

“It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own”
Ibid.

Where is the preparation? Not just in a class like this. We may think of this class as a class in preparing for marriage. It is, but the real preparation is gained where? In the home. But what this class can do is to help parents learn how to conduct the kind of homes that will prepare their children for a successful marriage.

This class can also help young people and children, you folks who are in your teens and even below the teenage years (I'm glad there are a number of you in this class). And dear boys and girls, if you learn in this class tonight that you're getting ready for wonderful things ahead, provided that you learn two great lessons. One is love and the other is self-control.

I'll tell you what this love and self-control is like. It's like an automobile. There are two things that an automobile needs. One is the power to go, and the other is the power to what? Stop. Do you need both? Do you, really? Well, don't you wish you had a car that would just *roll*, and nothing could stop it? Wouldn't you like to ride in that kind of car? No. And the successful driver is one who is always balancing those two powers—the power to go and the power to slow down or stop.

Do you know what happens to a drunk driver, quite often? He's more interested in what? The going instead of the braking. Isn't he? And we say he's a reckless driver. He is. Do you know why? His forebrain isn't working properly. Alcohol is interfering with the function of these millions of cells, packed right here in the forehead that have to do with reason and judgment and conscience.

But, my dear friends, there are many young people in their teens, twenties, and even people older than that, who get infatuated with what they call love. And they're as truly drunk as the person under the influence of alcohol. They cannot be reasoned with at all.

Why, not very long ago in a place a good many hundred miles away from here, some young people who were attending a meeting I was holding in a certain place said, "Brother Frazee, could we counsel with you?"

I said, "Yes, I'd be glad to sit down and talk with you."

"Well," they said, "We are planning to be married before long, and we'd like you to give us some advice, some counsel."

I said, "How old are you?"

And they told me. They were both in their teens.

"Well," I said, "Do you want me to be frank with you?"

"Yes."

I said, "Do you really want me to give you some counsel?"

"Yes."

"Well," I said, "you're not old enough. You're just not old enough."

And then, true to form, they began to reason with me. And I referred them to what the prophet of God says here, in *Messages to Young People*. You might just like to notice it. Hear what Sister White says:

"I have the most painful sense of helplessness when parties come to me for counsel upon this subject. I may speak to them the words that God would have me, but they frequently question every point and plead the wisdom of carrying out their own purposes and eventually they do so" *Ibid.*, page 458.

Even the prophet of God, in most cases, was not able to help people who had fallen in love, as they call it.

So you see, dear friends, if children and young people are going to learn self-control, they need to learn it before they are ready to get married. This is something that is to be taught from babyhood right on—love and self-control. And remember, this is two parts of the same coin. If we love God, we love to express our love to Him and also to do what He says, either what He tells us to do or not to do. If we love father and mother, we love to express our love to them, both by telling them we love them and by serving them.

Some of you've heard me tell about the little girl who threw her arms around her mother one morning and she said, "Oh, mommy, I just love you so much." And her mother said, "Well, darling, I'm so glad because mother needs a little girl to wash the dishes this morning."

"But mommy," she says, "I don't love you that way."

But Jesus says:

"...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength..." Mark 12:30.

That's right. And so our love to God and our love to our family will be manifested in practical ways.

Do you know the greatest privilege that can come to any child is to be born and grow up in a home where they see their parents practicing what I'm preaching tonight? In other words, where they see the parents manifesting this love and self-control.

Take your *Adventist Home* now, and look at the bottom of page 198. This is a marvelous sentence:

"The best way to educate children to respect their father and mother is to give them the opportunity of seeing the father offering kindly attentions to the mother and the mother rendering respect and reverence to the father. It is by beholding love in their parents that children are led to obey the Fifth Commandment and to heed the injunction; children obey your parents in the Lord"
Adventist Home, page 198.

See? So, dear parents, the greatest thing you can do to teach your children these lessons and get them ready for successful marriage someday, if time lasts that long, is to just in the home, be loving and kind and have self-control. That's the greatest thing you can do.

Do you see that Seventh Commandment? I come back to it. It calls for exclusive love: love that says, "No" to a lot of things as well as says, "Yes" to some things; love that says, "No" to everybody in the world but one. As we indicated at the close of our lesson last night, that calls for self-control that few people have today.

Notice, turning to Matthew 5, how complete this self-control must be. And pure love has it.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath

committed adultery with her already in his heart" Matthew 5:27–28.

Here are two people who are married, husband and wife. They said the vows at the altar; they're married. Does that mean that God expects that husband, all the rest of his life, not to even *think* a thought of wanting some other woman? Is that what this is saying? Precisely so. Well, doesn't that call for a lot of self-control? Yes, it does. When does he get it? Does it descend as a special gift from Heaven the moment the vows are said? No, no. This is the result of an experience of years in learning to say, "Yes" at the right time, and to say, "No" at the right time.

Let me illustrate it with a very simple thing which is more closely connected with this than you might think. Suppose you have a group of children: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 years old, and somebody comes in with a tray of candy or something like that. "Children, would any of you like something?" What'll 9 out of 10 of those children do, unless it is 10 out of 10? They'll take some with glee and put it where? In their mouths. What do they lack? They lack self-control.

I want to tell you something, friends. I had just as well be really plain about it. The child in tender years or the middle years, who is eating between meals and has no control of the appetites of his stomach, is getting ready to be just as lacking in self-control in his teen years, when it comes to the urges to have boyfriends and girlfriends, and lead on to putting their hands on one another, and manifesting familiarity and leading on finally to the full breaking of the Seventh Commandment.

This is what is happening in the world all around us, isn't it? Yes. It's becoming the accepted thing. Where lies the beginning of the problem? It lies way back there in infancy, in a lack of teaching order, regularity in eating, and self-control. Any child, I care not what its age, can be taught regularity, order, and self-control. I don't say that it can be *born* with all of those attributes. No. But it can be taught. And this is the great work of parents, to do it in love and through love and for love's sake.

For watch! Back to what Jesus is saying here in the Sermon on the Mount. Is it that the husband is to say, "Well, now, I've got to be careful that I don't look at any other woman, for if I do, I'll go to hell." Is that the thing that's to be troubling him all the time? Why, no. If he loves his wife enough, he won't want to look at anybody else. Do you see?

And it's the same with the child. If he loves his father and mother well enough and loves God, as he comes to the age when he knows who Jesus is and learns to love him, he won't want to eat between meals, even if there seems to be an appetite in his body that says, "Oh. I'm hungry."

Somebody says, "Don't you think it would taste good?"

"Yes, I think it would taste good."

"Well, why don't you eat it?"

“Well, I don’t think it would be good for me, and I don’t think it would please my father and mother, and I don’t think it would please Jesus.”

Are all of those good reasons? Very good reasons.

Now, children, are you learning those lessons? Daniel, when he was just a teenager, 18, went down there and there were all the goodies that the king of Babylon had gathered from the ends of the earth, heaped on the table. And he said, “Boys, come in and I’m going to feed you just like I feed myself. You’re really favored.” And you know there were a lot of those fellows from Jerusalem that said, “This is it. We’ve really a chance now to get a good feed.” They got it. But Daniel did what? He purposed where? In his heart that he wouldn’t defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat or with the wine of which he drank. And so he found a nice, courteous way to handle it. But the point is, he didn’t eat the king’s meat, and he didn’t drink the king’s wine.

Oh, parents, here’s another thing that I wish tonight I had nothing but this for an hour, but I want to urge upon your hearts this lesson: Unless your children have learned in infancy and childhood, *full* control of their appetites, they are not ready for those terrible battles into which they are thrown with the onset of adolescence.

Any of us who are older, I’m sure that we have marveled, at times, as we see some children come up through the childhood years comparatively good, sweet little things. Little angels, we say. And then they come along to the teen years, and we say, “What in the world got into them, anyway?” Well, it wasn’t something that got *into* them; it’s just something came *out* of them. That’s all.

What was the matter? Well, before those turbulent temptations of the teen years came to them, of course, they got along very nicely on some subjects. But when those things burst upon them, they had not been *prepared* by learning full self-control in babyhood, and infancy, and childhood. Do you see what I mean, friends? Am I making it clear? Oh, I hope so. This is so important.

Now, you dear folks in your teens, if your father and mother didn’t teach you not to eat between meals, if they didn’t teach you not to eat ice cream and cake at 10 o’clock, 11 o’clock, 12 o’clock at night, if they didn’t teach you what foods were good and how to say “No, thank you” in a nice way, but in a firm way, learn it now. Don’t say, “I’m so glad I was raised in a home where I just ate what I pleased when I pleased.” Oh, no! You’re just getting ready for trouble worse than you ever knew anything about. Just set yourself to learn the lessons. It’ll be harder now, but learn them, and if you’re in your 20’s and 30’s, wherever you are, set your heart to learn these lessons of the control of appetite on every point.

Why, my dear friends, here we are just between Christmas and New Year. I was talking with Brother and Sister Sorenson last night about the influx of patients in the hospital after the holidays. There are several reasons, but do you know one of the big reasons? People eat and drink like gluttons, most of them, during the holidays, and as the result, there’s more sickness right after Christmas and New Year.

Well, I want to ask you a question, do your children think that the way to be happy is to gorge themselves with all kinds of sweet things? Is that their idea of a sweet time? Two or three kinds of cake, pie, ice cream, pudding, candy—that's the way to have a wonderful Christmas or a wonderful New Year, isn't it?

Do you see what I'm getting at, friends? I'm seeking to drill into our hearts this lesson that if we want to build successful homes, we must rear children who have learned to love self-control. And the secret of it is in having fathers and mothers who love self-control.

Oh, it's a wonderful thing, friends, to see children that enjoy fruit more than they enjoy ice cream and cake. And I'm not here to tell you that it's a sin to eat either cake or ice cream, at appropriate times, that's not my business to decide. I'll tell you this: The more of that stuff children and older people eat, the more they want, and the less they eat, the less they want. That's the truth. So you can just follow that key.

But let me tell you something. Do you know why many children just seem to be crazed to get a hold of sweet things like candy? Because their bodies are lacking in the minerals and vitamins and the satisfaction that comes in the natural fruits. That's a fact. Very few people eat enough fruit.

You say, "What does this have to do with the Christian home?"

It has a lot to do with it. Just as the starved child, not knowing how to interpret his cravings, thinks he craves candy when really his body is crying out for fruit, so the adolescent, the teenager, who has not had enough love and affection in his home is starved for that, and he's ready for the first infatuation that comes along. The reason there's so much of this puppy love of youngsters falling in love in their teen years is that they just haven't had enough love at home.

Look now at your *Adventist Home*, page 198, and you'll see what I mean:

"In many families there is a great lack in expressing affection one for another. While there is no need of sentimentalism, there is need of expressing love and tenderness in a chaste, pure, dignified way. Many absolutely cultivate hardness of heart and in word and action reveal the satanic side of the character" *Adventist Home*, page 198.

Notice this next sentence:

"Tender affection should ever be cherished between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters" *Ibid*.

Oh, how nice it is when the children see father and mother expressing love to each other in the home—when it's just as natural as the sun rising, to see father put his arm around mother's neck and say, "Darling, I love you." It's good for children to

see that. Walking down the street may not be the place for that exhibition, but the home is. Children should see that expression of love from husband to wife, and wife to husband. But it doesn't stop there—from parents to children and children to parents.

Do you know there's many a child who grows up today and has never received many real expressions of love? Ah, dear ones, whatever your age, if you've been in that kind of a refrigerator, get hold of the love of God and start to thaw things out. Yes, I mean it.

If you're the parent, start in to express love, father to mother and mother to father and parents to children. But if you are one of the children, and your parents haven't gotten hold of this, get so much love from Jesus that you can go to father and mother and throw your arms around their neck and tell them you love them. If they haven't somehow had this instruction, and they haven't learned this and you're learning it now, I repeat, start in to thaw things out.

I'll tell you something: the boy who quarrels with his sisters is just getting ready to quarrel with his wife a few years later. That's all. And the girl who can lie in bed while her mother gets breakfast, that girl is getting ready to want her husband to get his own breakfast, you understand, while she does what she pleases. No, friends, we're studying tonight the foundation of the Christian home. And it's laid where? In the parental home: love and self-control.

I was just speaking of how, just as all these artificial sweets come in to tempt and try to satisfy the appetites of children and young people that haven't had enough fruit with their natural sweets, so it is in this matter of love and affection. Let me read you a statement from *Volume 2*, page 482:

"This is a fast age. Little boys and girls commence paying attentions to one another when they should both be in the nursery, taking lessons in modesty of deportment. What is the effect of this common mixing up? Does it increase chastity in the youth who thus gather together? No, indeed! It increases the first lustful passions" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*, page 482.

Read the whole page, dear parents.

It's about time for us to close our class tonight, but I hope that you will carefully study the references that we have given you tonight, in their setting. I wish you would study, especially that last chapter in *Messages to Young People* on the marriage of Isaac. It's short.

The question might come to some of our minds: how long does it take to lay this foundation of learning love and self-control, so that young people are ready for marriage? I don't know that it can always be expressed in years. It took Isaac 40 years to learn it; at least he *used* all that time. God, in His providence, arranged it. I

know people lived longer back then. And I'm not saying that it needs to take anybody here 40 years. That isn't my point.

My point is that just to say that a person has gotten to a certain age, whether you say 21 years old or 24 or whatever, doesn't, in itself, tell very much. There are plenty of people in their 30s and 40s who have not yet learned *either* love or self-control. They're not ready for marriage.

But on the other hand, I say to you that this is something that no boy or girl, I care not if he has the best home in the world, can learn in just a few years.

Notice this statement in *Messages to Young People*, page 452, and with this, we close our study tonight:

“The young affections should be restrained until the period arrives when sufficient age and experience will make it honorable and safe to unfetter them... A youth not out of his teens is a poor judge of the fitness of a person as young as himself to be his companion for life”
Messages to Young People, page 452.

So given the best surroundings, given a home where father and mother love each other and love the children, where brothers and sisters and other relatives express affection one to another, still, it takes time. It takes time. You can grow squash in a few months, but it takes longer than that to grow an apple tree and get apples. Doesn't it? Yes, my dear friends.

And this sweet and wonderful plant of love, as manifested in the Christian home, is something that takes time to grow. The marvel of the universe is going to be this: that in this modern age, which is like Sodom and Gomorrah, which is so lacking in *pure* love and so utterly lacking in self-control, God is going to develop some children and young people and older ones who are perfect masters of themselves, who are like Enoch and Joseph in their purity.

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee so much that Thou hast told us to dig deep and lay a foundation on the Rock. Bless these parents tonight, that they may teach their children these lessons. Bless those of us who are not married, and whether we're little children, or teenagers, or older ones, may we determine, for Thy dear sake, that we will learn these lessons of love and self-control. Amen.

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