

# Preparing for Marriage 4 of 8

## *Early Steps*

#0053

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—January 3, 1970

At the beginning of our study tonight, I would like to raise this question, or rather, make this statement. I don't want to even, by raising the question, seem to indicate that there is any uncertainty about the matter. Here is the marvelous fact, my friends, and I'm speaking to the unmarried. If God has planned for you to be married, there is a special one that He has planned for you to be married to.

Now, in my class for the married that I had some weeks ago, I pointed out that the enemy is ready and willing to take advantage of that fact, and cause married people to feel, "Well, I guess I made a mistake." But we covered that with clear statements from inspired sources that we're not to permit doubts like that to come in.

When the marriage vows have been said, when two people have been joined together, we read a clear statement that even if the Devil had led them, they were to do what? Make the best of it. This is the only way that society could hold together if people were forever considering and *reconsidering*. God has made the consummation of a legal marriage the *end* of the question. From then on, there's only one thing for those two people to do before God and each other. It's to do what? Make the best of it.

But I'm not dealing with that tonight; I've already studied that. I'm dealing with the unmarried. And this is a glorious fact. If God is calling a young man or a young woman to marriage, it is not merely in a general sort of way. It is not simply that there might be any one of 1,000 or 10,000 people that it might work with. There is a particular *one*.

Now, I know that good people, and some of them are good friends of mine, think that that is too idealistic, that it might be even romantic. Well, I'm not dealing with it from the romantic standpoint at all. I'm dealing with it from the standpoint of divine providence.

Turn, please, in *Message to Young People*, to page 219, and you will see what I base this statement on. I want you to see it for yourself, because I tell you, my dear friends, it makes a great deal of difference to a young man, when he comes to the place of seeking a life companion, whether he has the idea that any 1 of 100 might be suitable, or whether he knows in his heart that there is *one*, just one, that is Heaven's first and best choice for him.

Before we read this statement, let me make plain something else. I do not mean by that, that there is only one person in all the world that you could make a successful home with. No, I don't mean anything like that. Any two people that are Christians and will put their shoulders to the wheel can make a successful home.

Don't forget that. I repeat it. Any two people that are Christians and will make the effort can make a success.

But there are degrees of success, my friends. And there are heights of joy and heights of achievement in blended lives that are possible only in the *special* one that God has intended for you and you for.

Now, *Messages to Young People*, page 219. Someone will say when we read this, "Well, this isn't talking about marriage." It's talking about something that includes *everything* in life. Do you have the middle paragraph there? What are the four first words here in the paragraph? "Each has his place." Now notice the rest of the sentence. Will you read it with me?

"Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven"  
*Messages to Young People*, page 219.

Do I have a place? Oh, yes. My place, right now, is in this pulpit here in the chapel at Eden Valley. That's my place. Is that right? Can I have the satisfaction of knowing that Heaven has planned for me to be here? Why, sure, that's my privilege.

Now, this is important. But tell me, friend, do you think the matter of my companion in life is even more important? And will you tell me that God will have a place for me to work, but it doesn't make any great difference to Him which one of 100 girls I marry, just so they're decent and I go about it in a right way? Why, the idea, friends, is entirely apart from this paragraph.

Now let's read on:

"Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God" *Ibid*.

Oh, I think that's wonderful. Now, when you get up to Heaven, do you think there'll be a place there for you? Jesus said:

"...I go to prepare a place for you..." John 14:2.

Isn't that a wonderful promise?

I've tried to imagine how it *might* be if it weren't the way God has planned it. Suppose I get up there to Heaven, and finally, I get to meet Jesus. And I say to Him, "Well, Jesus, where am I going to stay up here?" Now remember, this isn't going to happen. And He stops and He thinks, "Let Me see, I wonder where there would be a good place for you?" And He calls one of the angels and He says, "Do you know of any vacant room anywhere in the city?" And the angel consults his list and he says, "Down in housing project 312. There is a vacant room number 1,718. I think we can fix him up there."

Do you think it'll be anything like that? Why friends, nothing remotely like that. My blessed Lord is going to take me personally to the mansion that He personally has prepared for *me*. And it isn't going to be like *anything* that any of the rest of you have. That's what is going to make it interesting to visit around. When you come over to see my private lake and waterfall, and the view of the mountains on the one side and the great valley and plain on the other, you're going to say, "This is marvelous."

But you know something else you're going to say? You're going to say, "You ought to see what the Lord has fixed up for me." It's going to take us some time just seeing the particular individual providence that has planned something special for each of us. Do you see what I mean, friends?

I have said all that to say this—to repeat this. Look at it again:

"Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God" *Messages to Young People*, page 219.

Oh, then just as sure as there's a special place up there, there's a special place for me where? Right here in this world. Well, listen, let's make it very geographical. If there's a special place for me, and there's a special place for a certain woman that's the same place that I'm in, who's she going to be in God's order? My wife. Is that right? Do you see what I'm getting at, dear friends?

How can she be in a special place and I be in a special place and we're both in the same place unless God has planned for this special union that He has called marriage? So I conclude, and it's a happy conclusion, if you're unmarried, you have the wonderful hope, the wonderful privilege of looking forward, if God wants you to be married, to somebody that He has prepared especially for you, and by the same token, prepared you especially for.

And all this preliminary is to get *you* ready and to get your partner ready. Say, friends, wouldn't it be a good thing to stay in the oven until the bread is done? What do you say? Too much half-baked stuff coming on the table! That's why marriage in so many lives today is so unsatisfying. The preparation has not been done.

Well, we dwelt on that in the last two lessons, this preparation and the parental home, and we're working now on these steps that lead, at last, to engagement and marriage. And as we've seen, of course, there is an experience of courtship that precedes engagement.

What is courtship? I would like to have you think of courtship in this way. Courtship is the serious effort of two people to find out whether it is God's will for them to be married—the sincere, frank, earnest effort to find that out in company with each other.

But now you'll notice in our diagram, I've listed four steps before we ever get there. And what is the purpose of these four steps? I'll tell you why those four steps

are there. It's to keep you and me from wasting our time, and worse than wasting our time, in courting somebody that God never intended for us even to consider.

Let me hasten to explain; I don't mean that it's wrong for there to be more than one courtship during a person's life. A young man may, after taking these preliminary steps with the utmost sincerity, court a certain girl, and then later, either he or the girl finds out that God never meant them for each other at all. And if the preliminary steps have been taken in the right way and the courtship is carried on in the right way, they can part company without either one of them having a broken heart, and without either one of them feeling that the other is an enemy, and each can go his way with faith in God and in the other party. This is the ideal.

No, I do not mean to leave the impression that the first courtship you enter into *must* eventuate in marriage. The purpose of the courtship is to *find out* whether there is to be an engagement and marriage. I think that sometimes young people, after they have become somewhat acquainted with these first four steps, which we're going to study more carefully tonight, are sometimes inclined to get the idea that if they've gone through all those four steps, then a courtship is more or less of a formality to be gone through as soon as possible, and gotten through, and on to the marriage. Nothing remotely like that should be in our minds, friends.

These first four steps are a preliminary screening process. And let me tell you why they are so important. We are not dealing with something like shopping for an automobile, or looking for a piece of real estate to buy. We're dealing with a union that involves the deepest emotions of the human heart. Love is the electric current of the soul. Electricity is a wonderful power, provided it's used in the right place, in the right way, at the right time. Am I correct?

It would be possible to burn this building down if electricity were used in the wrong way, at the wrong place, at the wrong time. Am I correct? Same electricity. So with water power, steam power, *any* power, power, by its very nature, has a great potential for good or for ill.

And so with this great experience of love, when it is inspired by the Divine, and each step taken is a step heavenward, it can be a wonderful experience. But I want to tell you something, friends, and most of you in this room already know what I'm saying, but none of us in this room has fully appreciated all the implications of what I'm about to say. That is this: that the mere being in each other's society tends to draw a man and a woman together. That's the *tendency*.

Now, married people, if they're decent, if they understand the law of God, they continually are under restraint, a divine restraint, and they put their will in harmony with that. And a married man does not allow a natural human *tendency* of being drawn to some other woman than his wife. He doesn't allow that to affect his conduct. Do you see what I mean, friends? And the same with the married woman.

But I have already shown you that unless unmarried people have learned that same self-control, they are not ready to enter into marriage. And I'll go further, or come back closer: They're not ready to enter into a courtship.

Courtship calls for a great deal of self-control. For a young man to be engaged in courtship with a young woman, and to know that perhaps this is the girl that is to be his wife, and to feel stirring in his heart the beginnings of that love, which if it is God's plan, will finally flower and fruit in a successful marriage—to feel those stirrings in his heart—and yet to be able to control his *hands*, so they don't touch that girl; to control his eyes so that they don't begin to send love messages; to be able to seriously enter into the business of courtship without emotion taking over and pushing the thing through, throwing reason aside, I say, calls for a tremendous amount of self-control.

"Oh," somebody says, "Brother Frazee, you're taking all the *romance* out of courtship."

I am taking a lot of a certain *kind* of romance out, dear friends, I *hope*. Because that which is called "romance" in the world, so often works counter to reason and judgment, and so often rides over and away from any counsel that might be given. The time, the *best* time for romance—shall I tell you when it is? After you're married. Then you can have a lifetime of it—the *right* kind. And the engagement period, of course, too, in a preliminary way.

But the real love, the best love, the glory of love, is reserved for marriage itself. Wouldn't God plan it that way, friends? What a pity to have the soup so wonderful and all the rest of the meal a disappointment. What do you say? Oh, no! Thank God, it's to get better and better and better. But remember, this calls for self-control in the courtship.

As I say, these four preliminary steps are so fundamental. The first one, I have phrased for you tonight in these words: Counsel—that is counsel with God, with your parents, and with the other counselors that God has appointed—men and women of experience. God-fearing counselors.

Your first question is: Is God calling me to marriage? That's the first thing to find out. Not *who*, but *whether*.

Oh, but somebody says, "Isn't God calling everybody to marriage?"

Well, I covered that briefly last night. He's certainly not calling everybody to marriage the same day, is He? No. So the first question is: Is God calling me to marriage? And I'll study that more fully with you another time, as to how we may know that. All right.

Number two: Counsel, *am I* prepared? I've gone over some of that with you as to what preparation means. And remember, these are things you counsel about. These are things you kneel down and pray to God about. But remember, there's nothing to pray and counsel about number two unless you've first counseled about number one. The *teenager* doesn't have to be kneeling down and saying, "Lord, who am I to marry?"

I'll tell you a secret. God won't tell you. Now, the Devil might. We had a reference on that, didn't we? Yes. Perhaps we better review that so that we get our

thoughts clear on this. *Messages to Young People*, page 455. We read the last paragraph on this page the other night; we're going to read the first one just now:

"Satan is constantly busy..."

To do what?

"...to hurry..."

Who?

"...inexperienced youth into..."

What?

"...the marriage alliance" *Ibid.*, page 455.

So the Devil is working at it all the time. No, we are not to be hurried in this, and we are to take our steps in order. First step: Is God calling me to marriage? Second step: Am I prepared? And in both of these, we are to counsel.

Now, tonight I want you to notice the third and fourth steps, and these steps are also steps of counsel.

Three: Counsel with the young man's advisors regarding who.

And I'll put number four on here, so we can look at them together. [Elder Frazee is writing on a blackboard.]

Four: Counsel with the young woman's advisors.

Let us look at three and four. Here is a Christian young man. He has counseled with his parents, with the Lord, and with men of experience in the church who can help him, and together they have come to the conclusion that God is calling this young man to marriage, that he is prepared (That doesn't mean he is perfect, but he is prepared). What is his next step? He talks over with God and with his parents and with his counselors, *who* might be God's choice for me? Who might be God's choice for me?

Did God plan Rebecca for Isaac? Oh, yes. And God is perfectly willing to plan marriages today, and these are the steps if we want guidance from the Lord.

Now, you say, "What's that fourth step for?"

When the young man has counseled with the Lord and with his parents, and with the other counselors that the Lord leads him to, and together they feel that Mary is the girl that might be considered (Now, remember, they're not deciding that this young man is going to *marry* Mary. They're merely deciding that she is somebody who *might* make a suitable companion: the best that the young man and his God-fearing parents and his God-fearing counselors can pick out for him to court. Do you

see, friends?) Looking at it from every angle—from the standpoint of his work in life, his fitness to do this or that, *who* would make him a good companion?

By the way friends, do you think that makes any difference? Might the man who is going to spend all his life farming need just a little different type of wife from somebody who is going to be a doctor or somebody else who is going to be a minister or somebody else who is going to be a musician? Might he? Or does that make any difference? Well, you can see it would make a great deal of difference. Certainly, if I were going out to hunt for a *business* partner, I'd hunt for somebody who could help me in the business that I was in or going in, wouldn't I? Do you see why that courtship is best delayed until one knows what his lifework is?

Not too long ago, I had the unhappy privilege of counseling with a couple who were married, and they were very unhappy. As they both talked frankly to me about their problems, I discovered that the young woman (Well, she's not so young now. They've been married quite a number of years.) was greatly disappointed because her husband wasn't in the ministry.

She married him when he was a ministerial student. And she pictured herself all through life being the wife of a minister, you understand? But somehow it hadn't worked out. I think he was in the ministry maybe a year or two, and it didn't seem to work out, and so he was in some other line, and she felt rather short-changed and humiliated, and her whole life was just a burden.

Well, of course, I had to read to them the Lord's instructions about making the best of things. And I'm happy to say, they got some help, and they are, as far as I know, happy now.

But do you see what I am getting at? Therefore, in counseling with this young man, his parents and the other counselors that he seeks advice from will consider what his lifework is, as far as seems at the moment, and what he's fitted for, and who will best be a help-meet for him. Did God make Eve a help suitable for Adam? Ah, yes.

You know, it's a wonderful thing, friends, when a young man has a woman who just fits with his needs. Let me give you a picture of her in Proverbs 31. Turn over to this last chapter in the book. Oh, this is a wonderful chapter. Proverbs 31:10 and on to the end of the chapter:

"Who can find a virtuous woman?" Proverbs 31:10.

Well, I tell you. Of course, it's a rhetorical question, but I'll tell you what the answer is. The man that seeks counsel from God and the ones that God has appointed that he shall counsel with, he can find this woman.

11<sup>th</sup> verse:

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her"  
Proverbs 31:11.

12<sup>th</sup> verse:

“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life”  
Proverbs 31:12.

28<sup>th</sup> verse:

“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband  
also, and he praiseth her” Proverbs 31:28.

Turn now to your *Messages to Young People*, and I want you to notice a word that belongs in between the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> verses. This is so sweet; I want you to see it right here on the inspired page. Some of these verses we’ve just read are quoted here and some others from Proverbs:

“‘A prudent wife is from the Lord.’ ‘The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her... She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.’ ‘She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her,’ saying, ‘Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all’” *Messages to Young People*, page 436.

In other words, “Darling, you are the one and only.”

Now the sad thing is, the way society is run today, many a girl hears this before she’s married, from a half a dozen different fellows in succession. She never hears it very often after she’s finally married. That’s the way the world is doing things today. But that isn’t the way God intended it at all.

And my dear young friends, you who are unmarried, if you will let God conduct your search and guide your seeking, you’ll find the one that this verse is talking about. There is one who fits this picture for *you*, for what you need is something a bit different from anybody else in the world. You are an individual, like no other one, and your ideal companion is an individual, like no other one. And it’s a wonderful thing, friends, when this experience isn’t just some poetry or song; it’s a fact.

And, may I tell you, very honestly, friend, I know what I’m talking about. I know what I’m talking about. God did this for me. And I know what I’m talking about because I have seen Him do it for others who have been willing to take these steps. Oh yes, friend. If you want to get to a high mountain, it takes a number of steps to get there. If you want to slide, that’s way on down.

All right, then this young man is counseling with his advisors about who? But listen, when he’s finally found that Mary, at the moment, is the one. This is the best light he has. And remember, he’s making the decision. He’s counseled with God,



he's counseled with his parents, and he's not going to try to run ahead of counsel. But on the other hand, counsel isn't going to just arbitrarily say, "Mary is the girl for you and you marry her whether you like her or not." No, no, nothing like that. This is guidance, advice, counsel.

Now, he has another step to take before he starts courting Mary. Do you know why? Mary belongs to somebody. And if she's a Christian girl, Mary *knows* she belongs to somebody. And if her parents are God-fearing parents and rightly instructed, *they* know that Mary belongs to somebody. And it isn't just when Mary is three years old that she belongs to somebody. Mary belongs to somebody all her life. She belongs first of all to her parents. And she belongs either to her parents or to those who can act as guardians and protectors and advisors to her, *until* the day of her marriage.

You say, "That's a strange idea."

Well, now, wait a minute. Have you ever been to a wedding? Did you ever hear the preacher say something like this (Or were you so interested in the music and the dresses of the bride and the bridesmaids and all that, that you missed this little detail?) "Who gives this woman to be the wife of this man?" Did you ever hear this? Or do they still do that? "Who gives this woman to be the wife of this man?"

I wonder where that ever came from in a marriage ceremony? Isn't that a strange thing? "Who gives this woman to be the wife of this man?" Tell me, friends, can you *give* somebody something that isn't yours? Honest, can you? Now, *who* at that time tells the preacher that he is giving the girl to be the wife of this man? Who is it that does it? The father or someone taking the place of the father. Is that right? Yes. Did you ever think about it? Did you ever think about its implications?

Now, tell me, if the father is supposed to stand there in the church and say, "I do. I'm the one that is giving this young woman to be the wife of this man," do you think that that ought to be the first time he has a chance to say anything about it? What do you think?

*When* would be the time? After the girl's heart has been won? After the affections of the two young people are entwined? Is then the proper time for John to go to Mary's father and say, "You know, your daughter and I, we've been keeping company now for quite a while, and we've decided that we would like to be married and we have come to ask your blessing."

And what does the father say? I suppose if he's like some fathers today, he says, "Isn't this wonderful that they would even ask me before the wedding?" My friends, I wouldn't feel flattered with anything like that at all.

I want you to turn now to some very interesting words in *Messages to Young People*, which if we allow them to have their full weight, we'll see the importance, not only of step 3 but of step 4—*messages to Young People*, page 445.

By the way, there was another statement on this page that I want to call your attention to. It's the last sentence in the first paragraph:

“While they are to love and honor their parents, they are also to respect the judgment of men of experience with whom they are connected in the church” *Messages to Young People*, page 445.

So, God has counselors in addition to the parents.

But now to my point on step 4: You have the middle of the page there, don't you?

“A young man who enjoys the society and wins the friendship of a young lady unknown to her parents, does not act a noble Christian part toward her or toward her parents” *Ibid*.

When is the time then, for that young man to be known to the parents? After he wins her friendship? When? *Before*. Well, let's go a little further. After he enjoys her society? *Before*. Do you see that?

Now, this is close work and this is so utterly foreign to what is going on, that you may have to look at it three times and rub your eyes to be sure you see straight. Isn't that what it says? And friends, if you'll allow me to say it, it's just good common sense. But everything God says is good common sense, and if you want to be happy, young men, see the guardians of the girl before you start courting her.

By the same token, young women, if you want to be truly happy and have God plan your marriage, remain within the protection of your parents or other God-appointed guardians, until *they* give you the nod that here is somebody worthy of courting you.

“Ah,” somebody says, “I think that would be quite restrictive.”

Yes, it is. You know, royalty has quite a bit of restriction. I don't know how they're doing things in some countries today. Modern fashions and customs have made terrible inroads, even in high places. But at least up until a few years ago, if a young man had wanted to enjoy the society of one of the daughters of the king or queen of England, he would have had to undergo quite a bit of scrutiny. Don't you think so? Especially if he was interested in courting her, don't you think he would?

Of course, your daughters aren't worth as much as the princesses of England, are they? Or *are* they? You, parents, are your daughters worth as much as the princesses of England? Well, treat them that way, then. And let them feel that you are guarding them, not in a bossy way, not in a dictatorial way, but because they are so valuable, because they are so precious. Do you see what I mean?

“Ah,” but some girl may say, “Oh, I think I can choose for myself.”

Well, doubtless you can, and you'll have plenty of helpers, both devils and human beings.

It is amazing to me, how many people that ought to have better sense, are perfectly willing to help most anybody to court most anybody. I protest against it, in the name of God, my friends. Before you give the slightest influence to encourage any young man to court any young woman or to encourage any young woman to accept the courtship of any young man, you had better get on your knees and have a session with Heaven, and be sure that you're getting your signals straight from the throne. You just might be helping the Devil in his business of putting together people that don't belong together at all.

Now, turn over to the next page, and we'll clinch this nail:

"The question is asked, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' and the answer is given, 'By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.' The young man who makes the Bible his guide, need not mistake the path of duty and of safety. That blessed Book will teach him to preserve his integrity of character, to be truthful, to practice no deception" *Ibid.*, page 446.

Now, I wish you'd read the sentence which follows with me. All together:

"'Thou shalt not steal,' was written by the finger of God upon the tables of stone; yet how much underhand stealing of affections is practiced and excused" *Ibid.*

Do you mean that a young man might *steal* the affections of a girl? Well, how in the world could he steal something, unless he took it from somebody to whom it belonged, who wasn't willing for him to have it? Do you see what I mean, friend? If he's stolen the girl's affections, she's willing, isn't she? Yes, she's a willing captive. She's been kidnapped, hypnotized, enchanted, bewitched, infatuated. But she's willing.

But then I ask you. Who did the young man steal her affections from? Her parents. Read the whole page and the page before, and it's perfectly plain. But I want to tell you something, friend. You can't steal anything from somebody unless those things you steal belong to them. Is that right? That's right.

Yes. You can't steal that organ from me. It isn't my organ. You can't steal that piano from me. That's not my piano. But this book is mine. And somebody could steal it. Do you know another name for stealing? It's taking without permission. Do you know the only way you could take this book without stealing it from me? What would it be? To ask my permission *when?* Before you take it.

Let us arise to be dismissed.

Heavenly Father, rightly interpret to our heart these wonderful principles, these strange principles, these glorious principles, that we may love what God loves and be safe from the heartbreak, the sorrows, which are filling the world with misery. Cause us to reflect Thy image and carry out Thy plans and thus have heaven on earth. We ask it for each one in Jesus' name, amen.

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