

Why Marry?

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I don't think you can live the spiritual life by studying how to live it, but rather by entering in by faith to what God has done for us and to us in Jesus. So that's the subject; it's the spiritual life, as opposed to the unregenerate life -- that is; the life of ordinary people who don't know Jesus, and who have not any experience of God's Spirit. They live by their own powers and, on the whole, for themselves. It's the spiritual life, as opposed to the carnal life which is the life that many of us live after we've become children of God or been born of God. We find that we live partially for God, and partially for ourselves -- that's the carnal life, or the divided life.

And then it's the spiritual life as opposed to the soulish life, because many of us come into an experience of the fullness of the Spirit, or full surrender, but we still try to express our love of God by our own powers and our own abilities. We try to do it by the quickness of our mind, or the strength of our emotions. So although we are intent on doing God's will, it's in our way. So the spiritual life is the life that is lived from the inside out by the power of God's Spirit.

The way we've been tackling this subject has been by taking our personalities and examining them in detail in regard to the plans that God has for us. Last year, and the year before we talked about our human spirits that have the ability of communion with God, of intuition, and of conscience. This year we're talking about our souls, or the psychological part of us that consists of our mind, our emotions, and our wills. And this particular time we're talking about our emotions. So that brings us all together; we're talking about the emotions.

The emotions can be divided into three different kinds; those that are concerned primarily with our feelings -- we feel angry, we feel happy, we feel sad; those that are concerned with our desires -- strong desires for certain things or certain experiences; and then thirdly, our affections. And what we had been talking about the last time we met together was our affections. I'll sing an old pop song, very old, very badly sung. I checked with my wife for the words, and I think I know it, "Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage, I was told by mother, you can't have one without the other." But it is quite interesting, because I think our society isn't quite sure how to interpret the last line, "You can't have one without the other."

I think that's what has got so many of us into real difficulty over the life of the affections, because we're not quite sure whether it means you can't have marriage without love, or whether it means you can't have love without marriage. And if you think about it, would you not say that's how many of us have got into real difficulties about marriage? Because we think, "You have to have love to make a marriage go." And then many of us have gone on from that to say, "And you need to have marriage to experience love in your life."

And really, I would push you guys and girls who are not married - is there not a tendency in us to have all kinds of wrong motives in regard to marriage because we identify love with marriage? In other words, are there not a lot of us who think, "The only way I'll ever have anyone who will truly love me, is if I get somebody to marry me? Then at last I'll have somebody who gives me all their attention and their interest." Dear help us, I think some of us have such dreadful inferiority complexes that we feel, "Yeah, he'll have to love me," or, "She will have to love me, because we'll

be somehow bound to each other in legal obligations, and maybe, we hope, child obligations, and financial obligations. Maybe in that way I can ensure that some other human being in this whole wide world will love me first, and put me first in their lives." And really loved ones, if you're honest, I think we'll find that a lot of us think that way.

Maybe the reason why 50% of the marriages end up in divorce is because 50% of the marriages take place for absolutely the wrong reasons and the wrong motives. Many of them take place because a person thinks, "That's the way to get love." Now in a way, you can't blame them too much, because there isn't much real love around. There's a lot of talk about love, there's a lot of talk about caring about each other, but there isn't too much real love. That is -- the kind of love that a person tends to think a wife or a husband will give them.

See, we're no fools; we do feel that love means you put yourself out for other people and we do feel that love means sacrificing for others. In fact, love means identifying yourself with the other person; it means putting yourself in the other person's shoes, it means thinking of the person night and day. We know that there isn't much of that love around. There's a lot of periodic interest in other people, and a lot of philosophic expression of concern, but there isn't much deep love that is prepared to put itself out for others. That's why, I think, many of us feel the only chance we'll ever have of real love is if we get bound in marriage to another person. Then you see each other every night, and you see each other every morning, and you see each other at mealtimes so you're bound to kind of fall into love somehow or other. So, many of us marry in order to get love.

We identify love and affection with marriage, and that's why our whole affection life is so shot through with weakness and with sickness, and why our whole love of God is so mixed up and so messed up, and why our whole love of other people, after we get married, is so partial and pitiful. That's why eventually, because of that, our own marriages begin to die on the vine; simply because many of us marry because we don't want to be on our own in our old age. Really -- I know it sounds terrible, but I do think that many of us are fearful enough in this hard world, and are concerned enough, and worried enough, and insecure enough, that we think, "If we could get somebody to marry us, at least I wouldn't be on my own at the end. At least somebody would be there to care about us if we were sick, or if we died. At least somebody would be there to prepare me for my burial. At least somebody would notice or care." Many of us marry for that ridiculous reason; so that we'll have company, perhaps, at the end.

Now I think many of us too, marry for security. Many girls marry guys for security. Many guys marry girls for security. So we mix up the whole business of love and marriage by identifying one with the other. What we saw several weeks ago was that you're almost better, and you have to pardon the extreme of this expression, but you're almost better to come to the point where you say, "Love has nothing to do with marriage and marriage has nothing to do with love." You're almost better to say that. You're almost better to say that marriage is like every other thing -- an experience in life. It has to have love in it and it has to have the love that comes from God in it but actually no more than a job has to have love in it, no more than a friendship has to have love in it, no more than life itself has to have love in it.

Marriage itself does not take place because you love one person more than everybody else in the world -- that's not why marriage takes place. I mean, can't you see how ridiculous that is, if that's the case? How could any couple ever be close to another person? Every other person would feel, "Oh, well, I'm bound to be number three in this thing because of their vow. They married each other because they love each other more than they love anybody else in the world, so they can't love

me." A little child must feel terrible, because they must think, "He married her because he loves her more than anybody else in the world, so that leaves me and the dog kind of in second place." And yet loved ones, it has spoiled a lot of marriages, and a lot of families, and it has broken up the love that Jesus means to exist in his body; because we've identified love with marriage so closely, and we've implied by that identification, that unless you have marriage, you can't have real love.

Now loved ones, marriage really does not occur because you love the person more than everybody else in the world. It doesn't. You don't marry a person because you somehow fall head over heels in love with them, and you love them more than everybody else in the world. You marry a person for one reason, and one reason only and you'll find it in Genesis 24:42. It's the old story of Isaac, and it came to the time when he was to marry so Abraham sent a servant out to find a wife for his son, Isaac. Verse 42, the servant tells the story, "I came today to the spring, and said, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now thou wilt prosper the way which I go, behold, I am standing by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Pray give me a little water from your jar to drink," and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also," let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.' Before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Pray let me drink.' She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."

And you remember, the servant said, "Let this woman be the one whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son." That's why you marry; you marry because it's God's will that you and this woman, or you and this man, should live together on this earth as husband and wife, to do what God has for you to do. That's it. That's the basis of marriage. Now if you say to me, "But, can't you experience a falling head over heels?" Yeah, God makes that happen; yeah. That's the greatest moment for most of us; when we do sense we're really made for each other. We sense that. We feel we're made for each other, this is different than all other friendships that I've had. We're made by God for each other and that's when you feel like saying, "This thing is bigger than both of us." That's where that kind of terminology came from. It's not "this lust is bigger than both of us" it's not "this passion to be satisfied" is bigger than both of us, it's, "my Lord, and my God -- this is amazing that we have been made for each other, and you meant us to be together for life." That's what falling head over heels in love is about.

Now you may say, "Well, where does it go astray?" Well, the tragedy is that either some people don't experience that at all, and they are just out for the breasts, or the thighs, or the body so they create in themselves a lust for the other person that seems to overwhelm them and they think "this is the thing that's bigger than both of us, that people talk about." Either that happens, or many of us actually do meet the person that God has in mind for us, and we do sense that incredible falling head over heels, and that sense that we are meant for each other, but then we decide we're meant for each other to enjoy each other. And that's partly because there's such a weak knowledge

and understanding of what marriage is about in our society. We see everybody putting each other in the place of God and so, in spite of the fact that we have met God's person for us, we tend, instead of looking to God after that and saying, "Thank you, what do you want us to do" we tend to concentrate on the other person and worship the creature rather than the Creator, and the whole thing becomes utterly perverted.

Now it seems that that explains why many of us who really do meet the person that was God's will for us, manage to somehow spoil the relationship and the marriage. Maybe it would be good to point out that when God decides that two people are to be together, he tells them both and that's one of the beautiful things about it. In fact, that's one of the corroborating signs; that both of you sense this together. You both sense, "God means us to be man and wife." There seems to be firmness about that; there seems to be a rock like certainty about it that nothing can destroy. You just sense, "This is right" and you both sense it. And until you both sense it, loved ones, in no way can you call it God's marriage, or a marriage that is made in heaven.

So there is just no place for the chasing. The chasing is fun as a leisure time activity, but it has nothing to do with finding God's partner, nothing at all. If you want something to occupy your time, if you haven't other sensible things to do, then by all means chase; but that's not the way you'll find God's person for you. That's the way you run the risk of finding the wrong person and committing yourself to a hell on earth for your life. But the only way to find God's person is to trust him that he is going to make it clear to both of you, as he made it clear to Rebekah and Isaac so it might be good to keep that in mind.

One of the illustrations of it is found in a dear guy called Brengle, who was educated in one of the Eastern schools towards the end of the 19th Century, and was destined for a large church that one of the millionaires wanted to build for him. He heard about the Salvation Army, and he sought God's will for him and eventually sensed he should join The Salvation Army. The Salvation Army was a rag tag corps of evangelistic laborers, and coalminers, and everybody but pastors, who were caught with the idea that men could live above sin, and could live victoriously, however bedraggled, and however drunken they were.

So Brengle eventually joined The Salvation Army and then he came back from England to America, and in one of the series of services that he was doing at one of the corps, he met this young woman whose name was Elizabeth Swift. And as he says, "We met, and I fell in love - I lost my heart. Here she was, the sweet, gracious, cultured woman, filled with God's love, one my head and heart approved, and for whose dear sake I had denied myself in lonely hours of fierce temptation though I had not seen her face, and for whom I had prayed and watched and waited." So, he was sure.

So for months he prayed, and then he eventually wrote a letter to her. She answered immediately. "You are surely under a spell, an illusion. All my sanctified common sense says loudly and clearly, 'You must not marry him.' Some day you will be glad that I couldn't think as you did, that I kept you free. I am sure that God means better things for you. Please ask Him, as I do, to set you free." And that was the first letter.

So he prayed, and sought God, and after months wrote again to her. And she replied, "Your proposal has filled me with joy and with intense sadness. I feel that your love, if I could be your wife, would be the crown of my womanhood, but it cannot be." And that was the end of the letter. And maybe before I read the last letter, I'd point out to you that was a woman and that was a man, that were more concerned to find God's partner for them, than to grab at the first eligible one that came

along and that were really prepared to be single if need be, rather than miss God's will.

Months passed and he wrote, and she wrote back, "I have prayed much and thought much to find out if God meant to give me to you, thinking always in this order - first, of God's will and the good of His cause; next, of your welfare; and last, of the result of my own soul; and I cannot believe that He does mean it. I do not love you except as I would a brother, and when I think of your welfare my very affection for you cries out, 'You shall not waste your life so.' Not your love, but your life.

God will return the love into your own heart, and some other woman will be blessed with it some day. And what about my own soul? A married woman careth for the things of this world, that she may please her husband. I am sure that I should get worldly, and be always thinking how to look young and as nearly pretty as I could just, to please you. I should surely in that way put you before God, and I dare not risk that. You say that your life must be one of utter devotion to the man Christ Jesus? How that fills my soul with joy. I cannot ever risk hindering that."

But you can see that there's something steady, and something rock like in it. There isn't this charging to the altar because I now, at last, can be sure of my man or my woman. Eventually they married, proving that you can make it as difficult for God as possible. He will always make sure that his will is not frustrated by children who truly love him. He will. You can always risk it, loved ones, you can always risk going to the extreme and leaving it in the Father's hands. And in a way, it's the only basis for marriage.

I know you laugh it at first, but the truth actually is; don't marry unless you have to, really. Don't marry unless you have to. And I don't mean, don't marry unless you got into immorality and are going to have a child. I mean, don't marry unless you can't get out of it. Don't marry unless you know "This is God's will and there's nothing else I can do." That's it.

In all honesty, God is the one who says, "Put me to the test. Try me." And you can afford to put God to the test, you really can. Especially in these days in our society where the marriage thing has got out of hand completely; you and I all know that no one in society respects Paul's words about celibacy. We don't -- we say, "It's ok for the monks, or for the sisters, or for the Christian brothers, or for the priests." But yet Paul said it plainly, "God has given to some the gift of celibacy." But of course, our society tackles marriage as if nobody has a gift of celibacy and that nobody could have the gift of celibacy; the only people who have the gift of celibacy are the people who can't get anybody to marry them. And of course, it's so perverted an interpretation of scripture that 50% of the divorces may consist of many people who should never marry anyway -- God has something else for them.

So loved ones, do you see that in a very real way it's better to tackle marriage from the point of view of, "What is God's will for me and for my life?" Rather than, "Have I affection for this person," Or, "Have I love for that person?" You're in real trouble if you don't have affection for a person and if you don't have love for a person there's something wrong with you, because God has told us to love them with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves. So if you can't love people that you know, then there is something wrong with you. But it is too easy to work up that normal love to the nth degree, to the point where you think it is marriage love.

Marriage love consists of coming to a mutual place with another person where you both know God intends you to be husband and wife, and because of that you feel the world is turned upside down. Then you both turn to God and you find out what he wants you to do with your lives. Then as a result of that, the love that God anoints you with for others, gives you certain expressions to the

other person who is your husband or your wife that is appropriate for that relationship. But it is a gift, or a fruit, that comes after you set your will.

In other words, love is very much a matter of setting your will; love has very little to do with emotional feelings. Most emotional feelings are primarily physical in stimulation, and often very emotional, and very periodic, and very unreliable in nature. But love is setting your will towards a person and you only do that when marriage has been made plain by God in both your hearts as his will for you.

That's why loved ones, there's that verse that we looked at in 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5, "That each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God." So do you see how contrary it is to the attitude that certainly all of us guys have grown up with, and probably all of you sisters have grown up with -- the idea that sex is the big thing in life and marriage is the easiest, most convenient way to experience sex throughout your life, whenever you want it, and that's the primary purpose of marriage. Loved ones, that is an absolute perversion.

Marriage comes, first of all, because God has indicated to you and another person that you're to be partners for life. Why? Oh, three plain reasons that you find in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" And then verse 27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." That's the first reason. Because when God binds a certain man and a certain woman together, he can express through them his own image, in a more balanced way than he could do with either one or the other separately. And that's why he intends them to marry.

Sometimes the man expresses the strength, and the power, and the sternness of Jesus. Sometimes the woman expresses the gentleness and kindness of Jesus. And then as the years pass by, they intermingle and they become like one another, and the image of God comes forth in its beauty. You've met some husbands and wives like that; where they complement one another and where one of them gives something to us and the other gives something. That's one of the reasons that God has for joining a certain husband and a certain wife together.

If you pick your own woman, or pick your own man according to your likes and dislikes, there is no guarantee that the marriage will in any way fulfill that, and the marriage will eternally, therefore, be unsatisfying; because eventually what you think satisfies you, that is, the physical and emotional satisfaction, run out. After the first five years, really there isn't enough strength, or power, or exhilaration left in that to keep you together. Unless there is this deeper reason that you both begin to see -- God lovingly using the other's weaknesses at times to bring out your strengths and using the other's strengths at times to expose your weaknesses, until gradually you both become like one another. And hideous though the thought is, begin to talk like one another, and begin to have the same gestures as one another. But bit-by-bit God filters out the bad and leaves the good and that's beautiful when he does that -- he sets forth his own image.

The other reason is in Genesis 2:18, "Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Simply because it's God's will: God has willed you two to be together. That gives a woman more security than all the money in the world or all the diamonds. It gives a man more security than anything else could because they both know that they're married to each other because it's God's will. Then when they make the vow to take each other "for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, till death us do part," they know that they will

risk hell if they ever part from each other. The reason they're together is because it's God's will for them to be together and it was God's will from the beginning of eternity; it's written into the foundations of the earth. That is a security that nothing else can give. That is a security that no love, actually, can give, because love from a human being is so unreliable, but a thing that is based on God's will is forever.

The third reason is in Genesis 1:28, "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" God has something in his world for every partnership to do. For every man and for every woman he has something for them to do in bringing his world into order under his will, and that's why he destines certain men to be married to certain women, and that's why he alone can choose someone for you.

I could not tell you how hopeless it is to try to foresee how a man or a woman will develop in 10, or 15, or 20 year's time. It is absolutely hopeless. Nobody could do it. You can't. You can't tell what we men or women will be like in 20 years. You can't. There is no way in which you, by your own human judgment, can foresee how a person is going to turn out. And, when you get God's man or God's woman for you, it is unbelievable how as the years pass you see, "Yeah that was just the right person for me. Yes, look the way she's developing or the way he's developing is just what has to be with me day-by-day in order to keep me right." It's exciting when God makes the choice for you. You can't make it for yourselves. You can't.

The reason we get ourselves into trouble is we marry for love and we think we're great, you know, very noble and all; except that we have no idea what love is, we have no idea how it differs from lust. We have no idea how it differs from love of ourselves, or needs that we need fulfilled, and so we boast happily, "We married for love." You don't marry for love; you marry because God has indicated clearly that you and the other person are to be together for life, and it's the only basis for marriage. And then he of course, gives you a love that is deeper than anything that the songs talk about, and a love that is steady and rock like, and forever, and is real.

Any questions, loved ones? I would like to talk next Sunday more about affections outside marriage, but I thought we needed to try to clarify some of those things. Don't you see then, that there is a great sense of being head over heels when you meet God's person? God gives you that tremendous sense. Both of you feel the same way, you feel that God wants you to marry each other, and that gives you a great sense of excitement -- something that's different from any other relationship.

But then the important thing is, not to turn that upon the other person and to worship the creature rather than the Creator, and to think that that's why we're brought together, to enjoy each other, but to turn immediately to God and see what he has for you. So don't go too far in this business, "Oh, well, I shouldn't feel anything. Yeah well, let me pick the girl that I don't feel anything at all for." Our Father is dear, and he makes love, and smiles, and laughter for his people.

Questions from the audience:

Brother?

For folks that aren't married this is an exciting time for them. For some of us [inaudible 38:16].

That's why it seems to me very important to see the truth of the verses of scripture that God works

all things according to the counsel of his will. And if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin and we have fellowship, one with another. It seems important to see that many of us are in the position that you suggest, where we walked by the best light that we had, but we didn't know anything about this. And it's important to see that God lovingly deals with us according to the light that we lived up to at that time and that God not only works all things according to the counsel of his will, but allows nothing to happen that he cannot redeem.

It seems to me that God's promises show that plainly -- that there's no trial come upon you beyond what you're able to bare, and with the trial will come also a way of deliverance or escape. It seems that God's word always promises that he will allow nothing to happen to any man or woman that he cannot redeem and use for his purposes. I would think that that's the only place, brother that those of us who are married can stand in faith, otherwise I think you get into real difficulties. You're disobeying all kinds of commands about forgetting the things that are past and pressing on, if you start looking back. It seems to me it's the enemy that brings that kind of doubt in.

Of course, it's obvious too, that marriage is not flowers and roses all the way, and that's why we would be better to say, "I Ernest take thee Irene to be my lawfully wedded wife, to live together, to have and to hold from this time forward, in sickness and in health, for better," - for better we should say, or for worse, because we ought to see that there are worse times. There are times when she is worse, or you are worse. And there are times when the worst times are the best times. And the most difficult times are the times when God really molds us. So it is important, you are right, to see that God can redeem everything that we present to him.

It seem to me the most insidious words are, "I feel the Lord wants me to marry you." Those are the most dangerous words I've ever heard, and those words are used daily. "I feel the Lord wants me to marry you." I think you had better watch that commandment about taking the Lord's name in vain. Because maybe you could wipe out the Lord and just put I, "I feel I want to marry you." Don't use that one. If God intends you to marry him, or intends you to marry her, he probably will be mannerly enough to tell them, too. And then, it's wise that you don't you push it. I'm all for the liberated woman business, but it does seem that God has allowed the man in some way to have a responsibility to initiate or to speak first. Maybe I'm old fashioned, but I think that there's something there. And I'm not big on this "getting the woman to submit." I think you ladies have to tell us where we need to be put in our place.

But it seems in this business of initiation, it seems always suspect, doesn't it? When [Dianna], the huntress, gets her arrows out and goes [hunting] - you just feel a little uneasy, somehow, about it. Maybe where we should leave it is you should never need to tell him. I mean, if he's that dumb, maybe he doesn't deserve you! So you should never need to tell each other, either for a guy to use with a girl, or a girl to use with a guy, that "I feel the Lord wants me to..." You feel he's just come down from Sinai and spoken personally and I think that's dangerous: I think maybe we should keep the Lord out of it until he makes his own will plain to both.

So I would go gently on it. If you feel anything, you're probably best to forget it and to concentrate on God, and let the Holy Spirit bring it to the other person's heart and mind, and not you get involved in the "unrequited love" stuff. I do think many of us waste more of God's time, and bring more agony into our own hearts through creating fantasies around a person who has absolutely no interest in us at all. And loved ones, it's not an insult to that person; it's a compliment to the person, but it is a slash across the face of God. It is. That any of us would

waste our time creating fantasies about love around some human being whom God has not designated for us at all, and we end up stealing that time and that love from our dear Father. That's a slash across his face worse than any sword in Jesus side. So, often what we need to do is just stop it. Just hand it over to the Holy Spirit, and say, "Holy Spirit, what do you want me to do now with my life?"

Anything else? Yes?

[Question inaudible 45:09]

Yeah. Yeah, I don't know all the business man here, but every time a business man offers me an ultimatum I back off fast! If a thing's that tricky, or if it needs that kind of pressure, it's probably not a good deal anyway and I think it's the same with ultimatums. I think love that is from God, and God's will itself is always a gentle constraint. It is not a pressure that forces and bulldozes you and buffalos you. It is always a gentle thing that rises from within effortlessly and easily. And it is an experience of two wills coming together in a gentle, mutual oneness, where there is no forcing of one by the other. That's probably the greatest sign of something that is God's will, that the two wills move together effortlessly, and gently, and willingly. But where there is an ultimatum, you can almost be certain that certainly it's not the way God wants it to happen, and it's probably not likely that it is God's will.

The fear of being unmarried for your life is concerned with your trust in God. It has nothing to do with your own appearance, or your abilities. Or, it has nothing to do, actually, with marriage, funny enough -- it doesn't. It has to do with your lack of faith in God; fear of remaining unmarried. Once you get rid of all the silliness of all our mums, I do respect your mums – but all our mums want is us married early and all that kind of stuff and all our friends, "Well, all my friends are marrying." Get rid of all that, because who cares -- that's all silly stuff anyway. But after you get rid of all of that, then it is important to see that fear of not being married is primarily a lack of faith in God. It's like a fear of being poor, or a fear of being sick; it's concerned with your faith in your Father to take care of your life, and it hasn't really much to do with marriage.

I sympathize with the sisters. I think America is a great country, but in this particular issue it's uncivilized, savage, and barbarian, and the pressures that you ladies have to bear are ridiculous. I just think that here [in this church], we establish a sane, healthy, godly way to live and some of us have to start.

Shall we pray?

Dear Lord, we know that we can do a lot for each other here in the family. We know that we can help each other a lot to live this way. Lord, the sheer truth of it appeals to our hearts; it sounds sensible, and it seems to be consistent with your dear word, and we can certainly see how it enables us to love you above everyone else. So we would ask you, dear Holy Spirit, to give us grace and guidance, to make it easy for each other here in the family to live this way. Dear Holy Spirit, give us men a real, honest, clean love for our sisters, a freedom from spending our time just with the people that we like to spend it with, and a real care and concern for the sisters among us. For being prepared to ask them out and take them out, and enabling them to see that there is love apart from marriage.

Dear Lord, the sisters: we would pray that you would give us grace, to provide the gentleness, and the softness, and the affection to our brothers, that normally they're encouraged to think that they will find only in marriage. In this way Lord Jesus, we would ask you to help us to help each other to live this beautiful and this clean life with each other, so that we will be as husbands and wives to each other for life. Whether eventually we are married to someone according to the laws of this world, or whether we are never married to anyone, that we will always feel that we have husbands and wives, more than everyone else in the world, because of the brothers and sisters that love us and are concerned about us, and are prepared to take care of us when we are old, and are prepared to look after us. Though Lord, we know that you will be our guardian and our protector, a very present help in time of trouble, and we can trust you for all that we need.

So Lord Jesus, we thank you for the love that you showed us, and we thank you for the plan you have for us, and we intend to seek your will above everything else. And now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and ever more. Amen.