

Proverbs 11:1

Sunday 2/15/2015

It has been a really good week this week. I had two people saved. Shoney, a young woman who works with Kim and Sean, got saved this week, and Marcus made sure of his salvation. It has just been a really good week, and I appreciate all that God is doing in people's lives. I really appreciate the impact that talking about the balance in our lives has made a difference in so many of you. We have camped on Proverbs 11:1, and that is why we were joking about it; today we would be moving out of it.

Proverbs 11:1

A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

We really focused on talking about how that applies in every aspect. Today, as I said, we are going to look at our last study on the balance of the Christian life. We have tried to cover every one that I thought would, in a major way, affect our lives, and we have really gone through them in great detail. I think honestly, and I saved it for last week on purpose, that last week was the key to all of it—not just the balance explained as we have been going through, but the process to maintain the balance and not to lose it. It only makes common sense that it does no good to get a balance if you cannot maintain it and cannot keep it.

I gave you basically, out of the Bible in 2 Corinthians 13:5, the how-to. I gave you the basic threefold balance in the relationship with God that we always want to make sure that we go through to keep the balance right.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We talked about 2 Corinthians 13:5. It talked about the first thing that we need to do: examine ourselves. We need to look inward to ourselves and be honest with who we are and be honest with what the Word of God says to us. A lot of people come and hear the Word of God and get convicted about things. A lot of times they misplace the conviction. They do not know really where it is coming from. They think that it is this or it is that, but in reality, it is just the Lord tugging on their heartstrings, and we all need to learn how to examine ourselves.

The second thing I talked about, the Bible says in that passage, was to prove yourself. Of course, we do this through the structure of the New Testament local church, an accountability factor, and a responsibility factor. The last one I talked about was to know yourself: knowing your limitations, knowing what you can do, what you cannot do, what you should not do, and knowing where you are weak and vulnerable in all of those aspects.

These three form the beginning of maintaining the balance in our relationship with the Lord. This is where it starts. If you take these three and you put them into your life on a regular basis in every aspect of things that you face, then when you have these in place, when you have an issue that comes into your life, you know how to deal with it. We saw that when you put into effect

these three, then you have the next step or the next level to even fine-tune that balance even more.

Because once you examine yourself, prove yourself, and know yourself, then you have an issue in your life that you want to get rid of, something you are struggling with. Then I gave you the next threefold balance on the next level, and that is where you:

1. Identify the problem. You are really honest with yourself: "This is my problem. I have an issue. I have something here that I have got to deal with."
2. Isolate the problem. So many times people have a problem, but they really do not want to work on it, so they will fix all the other things that really do not need fixing just so they do not have to deal with the one that really needs the fixing.
3. Annihilate it. Completely destroy it. Do not give it any quarter. Paul says that in my flesh is no good thing. You do not give it any chance whatsoever. He says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." In the life that I live, I live by the faith, I live by the Son of God. You have got to follow that process.

When you follow these three, this is the process that we have talked about for several weeks in Jeremiah chapter one. This is where you have an issue in your life; you go in and you root it out, you pull it down, you destroy it, and you throw it down.

I. The Consequences of Unaddressed Issues

Then I showed you also the consequences of not dealing with the issues that come up in our lives. When we refuse to deal with things and sin in our life, sin begins to take root in our lives. In time, it becomes what we have talked about: a stronghold, something you cannot break. We always think of strongholds in the worst scenario. We think of a stronghold as somebody being hooked on drugs or somebody being an alcoholic. Those things are true; those are certainly strongholds. But a stronghold can be as simple as something like pride. A stronghold can be something as simple as a lack of motivation, procrastination, carelessness, anger, bitterness, or envy. Those too can become strongholds in our lives. Of course, it all has the same negative effect.

Then I showed you, remember last week we went to Judges 16, and I showed you through the life of Samson, a graphic illustration of a stronghold in our lives that we refuse to break. I showed you how Samson, and I brought you through the whole process, how Samson, because he would not do what he needed to do, how sin blinded him. It will blind you. You cannot see the things of God anymore. All you can see is what your stronghold is. It takes everything over in your life.

We talked about how not only his sin blinded him, but it also will bind you. He was shackled to this world, the Philistines, and all that they went on to. It completely took over control of his life. He had no more control of where he went and what he did. The Philistines saw to it that he was shackled to them forever. That is what sin does; it binds you.

The third thing I showed you through that great study is that sin grinds you. It completely destroyed his life. It will destroy your life. I do not know how many times somebody who probably in their young life had the potential of being great for God and doing some incredible things for God, but because of sin and because of the things that they have gotten into, they wound up being destroyed. It is a terrible, terrible thing, but it happens all the time. So we talked about the threefold process when a stronghold begins to come into your life: it will completely destroy you.

II. Relationships with Other People

Today, in our final study, we have been studying relationships for the last couple of weeks. I told you last week that the number one relationship that we have in our life is the relationship with the Lord. I want to talk today about relationships with other people.

Let us have a word of prayer this morning, and then we will move into it.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You for those that have come out today. We pray for those that are home sick and that are, Lord, that You will help them and bring them through and help them feel better. We just pray, Father, for those that are here today that the Word of God will go forth. Lord, You will be real in somebody's life. There are probably people here today, Father, that in their hearts they are saying, "Lord, if You are really real, give me what I need. Show me who You are." Now, Lord, I cannot do that. You are the only one who can do that, but You can do it through the preaching of the Word of God. Help us today, and we will be careful to give You all the honor and the praise and the glory in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Last week I said that the number one relationship in our lives should be our relationship with the Lord. I also told you every other relationship, every other association that we have, needs to be run through that relationship. What happens most of the time is we build that relationship with the Lord and we have it, but it is not number one in our life. So when another relationship comes in, we just run that relationship or any association around the one we have with the Lord, not through it. There is a big difference between taking something and running it through the Lord than it is running it around the Lord. That is exactly what so many people do today.

There are two reasons why you should not do that. First of all, we know that outside associations, outside influences, can damage the one we have with the Lord Jesus. We know that. We are who we associate with. If we associate with the wrong people, it is always going to be a detriment.

I remember I told you an illustration here several weeks ago, really several months ago now, about how when you deal with electricity, I was, I am not going to call myself an electrician, but I helped a guy who was an electrician at one time, and I learned a little bit about it. I would help him and do different things, but I am far from being an electrician or presenting myself as one. But I did learn this: I realized that in any kind of electrical gadget you are going to fool around with, you are going to have a negative and you are going to have a positive. Those two have to be hooked up. You have a neutral, but those two are the main ones.

I was famous for getting started. I did a lot of stupid things. I remember one time I shut down a whole office complex on their computer just because I did something stupid. I had the bad, nasty habit, and boy, he used to really get on me. I had a nasty habit when I was working in a panel box with all those hot wires in there that I would be holding it and have a screwdriver. Then I would put my screwdriver in his hand with the metal parts sticking out. All I had to do was just touch one of those wires and light up like a Christmas tree. You have got to be careful with it.

But I learned this: when you take the positive wire and you take the negative wire and you put those together, you blow the lights out every time. The fuse goes out every time. Never one time in the history of my life or the history of electricity did anybody ever put a negative and a positive together and a positive stayed on. The negative always prevails.

I am telling you this not to tell you about electricity. When you have a positive in your life, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you bring a negative in, there will never be a time when you match the negative to the positive that the positive is going to win. The lights are always going to go out. You are always going to blow your spiritual fuses, and you are going to have some problems. The negative will always win when you take a positive and a negative and put them together. So keep the negatives out of your life by association and just stay with what is positive. It is so simple.

The second reason is that when you build one outside your relationship with Christ, when you build inside your relationship with Christ, when you do it right, then the principles help keep you and guide you through everything in that fundamental balance so that it stays where it needs to be. So it is very important.

III. Finding a Partner in Life

Now I want to focus in particular today in this last lesson, and I told you this was coming, but I saved it for the last because I wanted to get everything out of the way. I want to talk to you today about finding a partner in life, a husband or a wife.

All you have to do is look around here, and you can see that we are a very young church. We have older couples, and they are invaluable in the ministry that we have here, but most churches are just the opposite. Most churches have the majority of people over 60 and 70, and they have very few young people or young couples, but in our church, it is just the opposite. There was a design in building that. That did not happen by accident. You have got to know what you want to target, and you know how to get there. So it did not happen by accident. It just was not "whoopsie daisy, how did this happen?" I know how it happened because I understand the process that when you go after something, you have got to be able to know what you are doing to go after it.

But that is our state today, and that is a healthy church. That ensures that this church, if Jesus tarries His coming, will go on long after I am here. It is a very young church, and so it is very important because many of you are single, many of you are young couples, many of you have kids that are going to grow up someday, and you are going to be faced with them wanting to date

somebody. Some of you high school kids are getting to that point in the next 20 or 30 years where they are going to want to date.

I know my Bob's daughter is getting married. She has got another one down there that will not last very much longer either. She is a darling. That is what you think. Famous last words. My own granddaughter, Maddie. I remember when Danny first, I had a rule that if you wanted to date my daughters, you had to come out and sit down and talk to me. I laid the line down where it was. I did not pull any punches. I told them what I expected, and I remember when Danny came over. Danny, he was paranoid. He was just a young kid back then. He is a man now, but he was just a kid back then. He came in there trembling and sat in my office and wanted to ask permission to date my daughter. I am purposely going to give him the evil eye and make it rough on him. I want him to know that the highway patrol is on the street. I want him to get that. But I knew he was a good kid, and he has been probably the best guy that could ever be for Jamie. It is a thing where I will never forget it.

But you know what? Your day is coming, Danny, where somebody is going to come in there and that little Maddie girl over there, and I do not mean to embarrass you, sweetheart, but you have been with Grandpa long enough that you do not pay attention to me anyhow. It is going to be a thing where somebody is going to come in and ask your dad. It is going to be just a little bit different, you see, because after he asks your dad, then you have got to come talk to your grandpa. There is going to be a double hit there in this kid.

Many of you are single. It happens. It is okay. You are single, and someday you are going to find somebody you want to get married to. I get it. I understand it. It happens. So I want to talk about this because I think it is very important that you understand some things.

The Bible says in Genesis 2:18, God Himself said:

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

I mean, that is what God said. Now I know in the Bible there is a gift of celibacy, but most people do not have that. I think in 40 years of ministry I probably only met one or two people that actually had that gift. So it is not something you get. You are 18 and you are not married yet. "Oh, I am going to be single the rest of my life." Oh, no. That is not how it works. Very few people have that gift. God wants you to have somebody, and He said it is not good for man to be alone.

God's plan back in the Bible, really the first plan God ever had after He created everything, this had to make you feel good, was to get somebody for Adam that was compatible with him. So take hope. When you get done naming all the animals, God will have somebody for you too. Maybe it is after you get done dating all the animals, God will have somebody for you. I do not know how that works.

God gave Adam a help meet. Now that is a lost concept today. Everybody thinks, "I am looking for a mate." No, animals have mates. God gave Adam a help meet. There is a big difference in understanding it. So when you choose a partner for the rest of your life, that is the first criteria you look for: a help meet, or at least it should be.

When God gave Adam his wife, God had already given Adam a commission. He told Adam to be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth, something that probably the only verse most of you young couples got down in this church if you look at the nursery back there. You got that verse down. Anyway, so He comes to the point where He was to repopulate the earth, but He needed help to do that. So God said it is not good for man to be alone because if He is going to fulfill the commission that I have given Him, then I have got to give Him somebody that will help Him meet the demands of that commission.

So He did not give him a help meet. He gave him a help meet. The help meet is not just to help meet the car payment or the rent or the water bill at the end of the month. The help meet is to help both of them together fulfill that commission that God has for them. If you are saved this morning, God has something that He has given you to do. Where He told Adam to be fruitful and populate the earth physically, He has told you and I to be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth spiritually.

Where Adam was to reproduce in himself because he was in God's image and he was in God's likeness, so in a physical sense, he was going to produce sons of God. He lost that image. We all know that. But when you and I got born again, we now have the ability through the new birth to win people to Christ to spiritually reproduce sons of God in the form of new Christians who were born again, born into the family of God. We are called the sons of God. So we do it in a spiritual way.

Just as Adam needed a help meet to do that physically, men today, women today, they need a help meet to do it spiritually today. In a spiritual sense, our help meet needs to help us do exactly what Adam was called to do in a physical sense: bringing people to Christ, fulfilling what God has called you to do. That has got to be the number one criteria behind everything that you look at. You have got to have that in your mind. I know it is as far from people's minds as Pluto is from the sun. I get it. But you have got to have that as the first criteria in your life when you look at somebody that is a potential person that you are going to maybe marry.

The real question simply comes down to this: Do they help me meet what God has called me to do? Or do they not? It is just that simple. This is not something you have got to go to the Greek to figure out. This is not something you have got to buy 28 books on. It is very simple. God saved you for a purpose. He has called you to a task. He has given you a commission. He wants you, because it is not good for men to be alone, women either, He wants you to have a help meet to accomplish that purpose. It is just as simple as that. That is how it works.

IV. The Threefold Balance in Marriage

We know that it takes two to make a marriage, a husband and wife. We understand that. But here is the problem with that. The Bible says that when a husband and wife get married, the two

become one. Well, then the marriage is incomplete. Because if a husband and wife make up the marriage and the two become one, then you only have one person in the marriage. That is why the second person in that marriage needs to be the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the two become one and they come to the point where Christ is in it the way He should be, then you have the marriage that God wants you to have. The Lord Jesus Christ makes up the other half. When one partner or the other or both do not want that, you are going to have some problems. So you need to pay attention this morning.

Now you take it a next step further. You have a husband and wife; those two become one. You have Christ making up the second part, but we know it takes three to make a balance. So the third part then add to it the Word of God, and now you have the exact balance that God wants you to have. The husband and wife becoming one, Christ making up the second part of the marriage, and the Word of God balancing it all out.

In my humble opinion, outside of salvation, the greatest decision you will ever make that will affect you for all of eternity will be who you marry. Now I know most of you do not think about these kinds of things, and this is why I saved this to last and laid everything out that I did on a balance. But you stop and think about this. In your life, there are only two things that you join yourself to that you become one with. The first one is the day you got saved, and you become one with the Lord Jesus Christ. The second one is the person you marry. Those are the only two things that you become one with in life. If you get the first one right and get the second one wrong, you are going to have some issues.

Right now, we are all destined to marry Christ someday. He is the bridegroom, I am the bride, we understand that. So my suggestion to you in this life is marry a person that is as close to Christ as you can. My advice to you would be not to marry the man or the woman, but my advice to you would be marry the Christ in the man or the woman. That would be my advice.

Everything you do for God and all that you reward at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3, 2 Corinthians 5, Romans 14) will come down to that decision of who you join yourself to. When you got saved, you joined yourself to Christ, and it changed everything in your life for all of eternity. If you make the wrong choice in matching up yourself and joining yourself in the second decision, it will affect you for all of eternity. You are still saved, but brother, you have a judgment seat of Christ, and you have a millennial reward that is based on you fulfilling the commission that God gave you, which is based on you getting the right help meet to fulfill that commission.

Now I said all of that, let me say this. I can see the terror in some of your eyes. Many of you find yourselves this morning in situations where a long time ago you got in the wrong scenario, and you were saved, and you married a wrong person. Maybe you did not have a church to go to, maybe you did not listen to what was said then. It does not matter. I do not want to be so hard on what I am saying, yet I want to be hard, but I do not want to give you the impression that if you have made a mistake in life and you are now married to somebody, male or female, that is not the help meet they should be, I want you to know that it is not the end of the world. There are still some things you can do in that scenario.

I do not know of any situation that we find ourselves as Christians in that we cannot do something, there is not a process to help us through that. I know some of you in here are in the exact scenario that I have talked about. If you had it to do over again, you would probably not marry the person that you did. I get that, I understand it, but I also want to tell you I have seen some of you women and some of you men do it better than anybody else I have ever seen it. When you find yourself in that situation and you realize it, but you make up your mind you are still going to do God's service the best you can, and you dedicate your heart to that, that is what I am talking about. I do not care what the scenario is.

I am giving you kids the best scenario there is. I am laying this out for all you people who work with me in the counseling ministry who will be topping this out to people you are dealing with down the line. I am not putting this out just so I can make somebody feel bad or make somebody hurt through struggling with something that they find themselves in this situation. That is not my point. You can always fix where you are at if you want to. There is not a time as a Christian, no matter how bad the situation is, God cannot, if you allow Him, make the situation better. It comes down to us. It comes down to us.

I am telling you the real issue that I am trying to get across to you is that you single men today and women, and you people who are prospectively looking for somebody, do not get yourself into one of those circumstances to begin with. If you are single, do it right. If you are divorced and you are single, learn why you went through that. Learn what was wrong with you, what you did not understand, fix that, and then move on in life and find you somebody this time that God will take care of you and give you a help meet. 1 Corinthians 7 is a definitive chapter on it, but we certainly do not have time to do that this morning.

The real issue is this: just like our relationship with Christ, most of God's people will never follow any biblical process to find a spouse. I preach my lungs out up here about you reading your Bible, following the love of that book, serving God, getting into ministry. God gives us incredible opportunities to restart and turn around and all of the things that we do and all of the people that we deal with. God gives us incredible opportunities, and I keep laying those things out, showing those things to you, giving you those principles, showing you how the best thing to put in your life, how to balance it all out. It is just like out of a hundred people, 20 of you will figure it out and do something with it. Somebody else just continues to do their own thing. It is the same way.

They never follow the safety structure in a relationship. They never do. You will tell them what the Bible says. I have sat down and laid it out, showed them clearly what the Bible says and how the Bible lays it out. Then they go around and ask the next 50 people what they think they should do. They go around and ask everybody, "Well, what do you think about this? Well, about that?" You just get yourself in such a confusion, and you waste your time asking everybody else's opinion when at the end of the day, there is only one opinion that really matters. But you know why you do that? Because you really do not want this opinion. That is why.

I know how it works. I used to do it all the time. Still do it sometime when I need to. I know how it works. It seems like that in our lives we just have to be in control. We cannot give our lives

over to God 100% and say, "Lord, in Your time, You do everything that needs to be done, and I am just going to trust You in it, and this is what we are going to do." They find a spouse honestly. I am telling you this is the way it is today. They find a spouse like most people go buy a car. You drive by, you see it, you like it. Then you take it for a test drive. Then you buy it. It is only later you get the sticker shock. It is only later you see how expensive it really was and what it ultimately cost you.

I remember I bought my girls their first cars. We were not much, but I wanted to do something for them, so I took them out there, and I will never forget taking them out to the car dealership and looking around and trying to find them. I had in mind what I wanted to buy them: something economy class where they would know all those things. I remember I bought Kelly a stick shift because I think every girl has to learn how to drive a stick shift. Who knows, you may have to drive a tractor someday. Everybody needs to learn how to drive a stick shift.

I will never forget when I took them out there, they were different ages, so I took them at different times in their life, but they both did the same thing. They looked at everything on those cars. They looked at the tires, they looked at the interior, they looked at the color, they looked at this, they looked at that. They looked at everything except the sticker on the window, how much it cost. That is exactly what we do in relationships. We look at everything except the sticker: what it is going to cost me. Is it a good investment or is it not? We do not look short term nor long term. All we see is right now in front of me, this is what I want, and because I want this, I am not looking at the end result.

Again, I say at the judgment seat of Christ, the single most damaging thing that will earn us wood, hay, and stubble is the decision of who you marry: somebody that is a help meet or somebody that is no help at all. I know how it works. It is not like I am preaching this not sympathetic this morning. I get very passionate about what I say. People think I am yelling at them when I am not. I am just passionate about things. I will show you yelling if you want to see it. I am compassionate. I talk to somebody on the phone, and I feel terrible afterwards. Somebody will call me up, and they will want to talk to me about this problem and that problem, and I wish they could just see me. I am sitting there listening to all their issues, and I am listening to them and saying, I am trying to formulate and pull all the principles out, and I am down there in my room, and I have got the phone up to my ear, or I have got a head speaker on so I can keep my hands free and do whatever I need to do, and I am down there and I am doing this. "I know. Well, I am telling you this is what you have got to do. You know what? You can say that all day long, but this is what you need to do. You know what? I am here to help you. Sure, I love you." And they take that as, "Well, he is mad." I am not mad. I will show you mad. I am passionate. I am passionate.

Do you want me up here as a pastor? "Okay, now. Let us look inside the Bible and see if there is anything there today. I looked yesterday, and it was not." If you cannot be passionate, people are like, "Well, I do not like the way he preaches. He is too loud." Oh, but I saw you at the Chiefs game. You were so hoarse the next day you could not even talk. You are up there screaming and doing a goofy wave as it goes down the thing. How goofy is that? You know why you do that? Because somebody said, "Well, he is a fanatic." You know where the word fanatic comes from?

It comes from the word fan. You are a fanatic about football. I do not care about football. I like to watch it. But I am passionate about the Word of God and telling people about the Lord. So I will allow you to look like a goof at the football stadium. Allow me to be a goof this morning. Paul said through the foolishness of preaching. I will be a fool for a while this morning. I would rather be God's fool than the Chiefs' fool. Nothing against the Chiefs.

But I am telling you, I know how it works. You want somebody in your life. I get it. You get lonely. You see others. You see boyfriend and girlfriend walking down holding hands. You see them driving along the road someplace, or you see them at church, and you are alone. I get it. The first thing you need to do is do not ever compare yourself and where you are at with where somebody else is at. You are saying, "Well, they are such a lovely couple." Yeah, he just threw her out of the car down the street and tried to run over her. Yeah, they are a lovely couple. Yeah, they are smiling on their face and driving together holding hands because they are on the way to get a divorce, and they are both really happy about it. Do not compare yourself with anybody else's scenario. You do not do that as a Christian. I do not compare myself to anybody. That is the only cause there is not anybody out there to compare to as weird as I am.

The bottom line is this: even if there was, I do not care what somebody else does. I do not care how good they do it or how bad they do it. I am me, and I will never be anybody else but me, and you are you. Your situation is not unique to the other couple or the other person. Your situation is unique to you and your relationship with God. He is not doing the same thing with you that He is doing with them. But I know how it goes. You get lonely, but instead of waiting and understanding why somebody might not be in your life yet, maybe you have some issues you have got to fix. Maybe if God put you in a relationship right now, it would be a disaster because you do not understand the fundamental, but you get in a hurry. I get it. So you take matters into your own hands, and it is a disaster. Or many times I have seen them when they do not care about what God wants them to do with their life. They just do it because it is all about them.

God wants you to have someone more than you do. He really does because He said in Genesis, "It is not good for you to be alone." While God has a plan to get you where you need to be, I can guarantee you right now He is preparing someone somewhere for you that when you get where you need to be and they get where they need to be, then God's Holy Spirit will bring the two together. We have seen it happen. But you have to grow and build a solid relationship with Him first. I told you last week, you cannot build two intimate relationships at the same time. You cannot get saved and be a young Christian and build and work hard at building a really solid intimate relationship with Christ while you are trying to build it with another woman or another man. You just simply cannot do that. It will not work. It will not work. But you have to grow and build a solid relationship with Him first. Then He will give you the desires of your heart.

In the Bible, I told you before, there is a gift of celibacy. I get that. But it is not very many people's gift. It is like a couple of weeks ago I talked about pastoring as a gift. Pastoring is not a job. It is not something somebody decides to do. Pastoring, from what I showed you in the Bible, is a gift. He gave gifts unto men, and it is one of those gifts with pastors. Not everybody has that gift. Other people have that gift and have the gift of celibacy, I guarantee you. But you do not have to worry about that. The real issue is simply that we will not let God be God in our lives.

That is the real issue. We keep trying to make it happen before God is ready for it to happen. Then we wonder why it just keeps getting disappointment after disappointment. We will not look at ourselves and be honest. We will not identify the problem. We will not isolate the problem. We certainly will not annihilate the problem. A thousand times I have seen a man or a woman not be patient and keep taking control of their lives and keep making a total mess out of it.

Now I am going to give you the best piece of advice anybody ever gave you. If you have not written anything else down, you want to write this down. Because this is true. Never buy a Camaro when your heart's desire is a Corvette. You know why? Nothing against Camaros. They are hot-looking cars. They are great cars. You just say, "Well, I really wanted a 'Vette, but I bought this Camaro," and then you say, "Man, I really like this." You love it right up until you pull up to a light when the 'Vette pulls up next to you. You are sitting over there, and you have to turn the radio up because you are hearing out the window. He is rolling over there, and you have got a 454 aluminum block engine, and you are over there in that little 283 putting along that thing, and the light changes, and he is down the road there, and you are saying, "Where did he go?" You see that fishtail in the back and that swoop down on those big tires? You know it is distinctive lights that only a 'Vette can have. There is not a man who bought a Camaro when he really wanted a 'Vette that did not say afterwards, "I wish I had waited and saved a little more, got a little more money, and got what I really wanted."

When it comes to relationship, do not buy a VW bus when God has got a Cadillac for you. Do not settle for a second-rate relationship over the best relationship that God will have in His own timing. You know why? Because you will never be satisfied. You will never be satisfied. I am just telling you that is the best piece of advice anybody ever gave you because right now when you go off the lot, you look at that Camaro, man, it is great. "Oh, yeah, I am glad I got this instead of a 'Vette." Keep pounding the side, you are saying, "That little thing, not a 'Vette, not a 'Vette, not a 'Vette, not a 'Vette, not a 'Vette." You try to convince yourself that it is a 'Vette. "Well, I know what I can do, I will go to that parts store over there and get some little stripping that says 'Vette and put it on the side." It will not make it a 'Vette. "I will put me big tires on it like a Corvette." Still not a Corvette. "Well, I will go do all this stuff, and I will convince myself that it is as good as a 'Vette," when deep down in your heart you know it will never be a Corvette, and you will never be satisfied.

V. Key Balances in a Biblical Relationship

You say, "Well, that is good, but how does all this work? How do you do that?" In finding a biblical relationship and a true balance, you want to look at a series of key balances that, just like last week and every other week, they all kind of work together. Because any relationship with any person will have to have a fundamental balance, just like the relationship with Christ has to have a fundamental balance.

The first thing that you want to look at in a balance in anything, your own life and the life of somebody else that is a prospective person out there, is you want to look for three things.

4. Lordship. Do they have the Lord Jesus Christ first in their life? You see, when a number one relationship is right with Christ, then every other relationship you have will be right. We get in a wrong relationship when a number one relationship is not right. When you love God right, then you will love each other right. That is foundational. That is where it has to start.

1 Corinthians 8:3

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

True love always identifies itself with the object. It always does. Lordship is unconditional love. Lordship is love in action. It starts with God first, and it starts with the person that you are looking for as a prospective spouse. This is a good Valentine's Day message. See, I sweetened you up with chocolate-covered strawberries. Then I am nailed. How do you do it?

5. Relationship. Ephesians 5:22-33 shows us that our relationship with Christ is the basis for our relationship with other people, especially someone you are going to marry.

Ephesians 5:22-25

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

You see, simply treat each other the same way Christ treats you. Christ does not scream at you, so do not scream at your spouse. Christ does not cuss us out, so do not cuss out your spouse. Christ does not belittle you and me, so do not belittle them. Christ does not know what buttons to push in your life to send you over the edge, so do not look for what buttons to push in your spouse's life to send them over the edge. Just throw them over the edge; it is a lot easier.

Christ never gets angry at us. Do you realize that? He never gets angry at us. He has no anger for His children. He gets upset with us, and He grieves over us, but you and I cannot make Him angry. Being an unsaved person can make Him angry because anger brings about the wrath of God, and you and I do not have to take the wrath of God ever. You know why? Because He poured it out on His Son on the cross so He would not have to pour it out on you. So why are you angry at your spouse?

God knows you and me better than anybody else, and if anybody, anytime, any place, wherever we are out doing something or you are out someplace, if anybody had a right to come down and embarrass us in front of everybody, it would be Him. You talk about belittling. You get up and you preach your first message, and you do not do a real good job, but you do the best you can. What if God came down there and said, "That was the stupidest thing I ever saw in my life. That was dumb. Why do not you just stay back and let somebody else do it, you idiot?" Would that edify you? Would that help you? Well, the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church." Why do you do it to her? The Bible says, "Wife, reverence your husband unto the Lord." Why do you do it to him? See, when lordship is right, it is the feeder system to a right relationship.

6. Fellowship. Fellowship is the natural byproduct of a right lordship and a right relationship in Christ, the relationship in the marriage. At this point, you begin to see the balance. Problems and issues now do not pull the husband and wife apart. This is what you want to look for in a spouse. You see it now before you do it. If you are ministering together, if you are working together, if you are doing things together, you get a clear rendition of what that person, if you know what to look for. You look for lordship, you look for relationship, and you look for fellowship because fellowship is the natural byproduct.

Do you know why husband and wife fight? They fight many times over differing opinions. He has one opinion, she has another. Because they are both immature and they do not know how to deal with it, they get escalated to a high level, and then it is World War III. You see, when you have lordship and relationship that produces the fellowship, then it is not an issue when you have a difference of opinion because your opinion becomes basically, "What says the Scriptures?" That eliminates it all. I think we call it in the world, "We are on the same page." Yes, in the same verse too. You see, the two have become one, so the lordship is together, the relationship out of the lordship, the lordship relationship, the fellowship. Signals of mind, signals of heart, signals of spirit. When that balance is right, and you find a person that has got those three things down, then you are going the right direction.

VI. The Genesis 24 Model for Finding a Spouse

The model for all of this in the Bible, and there is a model in the Bible for it. The model for all of this in the Bible is one of the most remarkable stories in all of the Bible. We went through it many, many times. But there are people here that have never heard it, and so we will go through it just briefly again. It is found in Genesis 24. In Genesis 24, you have what I call 19 principles on finding a spouse. They are infallible. It is revolving around a story about getting a bride for Isaac.

There are four or five key players here we need to identify. First of all, in our story, I am going to tell you real quick the story. You have Abraham and you have Isaac, that is his boy. Then you have Eliezer, that is Abraham's eldest servant. Then you have Rebekah. She is the prospective wife for Isaac. Abraham says to his servant Eliezer, "Go find a bride for my son." So Eliezer goes on this incredible journey through the rest of the chapter, and lo and behold, he finds Rebekah. Now Isaac is a Jew, Rebekah is a Gentile. He brings her back, and they become one, and they get married.

In a doctrinal sense, Abraham is a type of God the Father, Isaac is a type of Jesus Christ, Eliezer is a type of the Holy Spirit of God, and Rebekah is a type of you and me, the church. It is a picture of the day you and I got saved, my salvation. The Holy Spirit of God came after me, wooed me, talked to me, told me about the Master's Son, and I said, "I will go with this man to the marriage." The old past boys play a song that is my favorite. Most of you do not know why it is my favorite. I love to hear it all the time because it strikes back on this story. It is that song they bring when the camel train comes in. It is based on Genesis 24.

Now that is a doctrinal application. It is the practical. Abraham is still a type of God the Father. The Isaac here would be any young man here. Eliezer is still the Holy Spirit of God. Rebekah is still the prospective woman out there. I want you to notice that when you come through here, it is the Holy Spirit of God working in your life, my life, our lives to get you the right spouse, the right help meet.

In the text, there are 19 principles on finding a spouse. We have been through it many, many times. It is online. We will not go probably in one of the books back there on marriage. But I do not want to go through all of it. But I want to show you some of the major key ones that I think that you need to just understand today.

God's Holy Spirit must be the chief player in your quest for a husband or wife.

Isaac had nothing to do with it. Isaac stayed home with the Father. It was the Holy Spirit of God that went out looking for that person. While God was back home preparing Isaac, He was preparing Rebekah. At the right time, God's Holy Spirit got them both together. They did not need eHarmony.com. They did not need ChristiansMingleALotSingle.com. The Holy Spirit of God waited till Isaac was ready, waited till she was ready, and then got the two of them together.

No unsaved person.

2 Corinthians 6:14 makes it clear.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

He simply says, "No unsaved person for my son." When you are looking for a prospective spouse, no unsaved person need apply. There is no future in it, there is no value in it.

Look for a willingness to follow God.

Eliezer is looking for a willingness in this woman to follow God. He is looking for the right attitude of heart about the things of God in ministry and in dealing with people.

The Holy Spirit has a plan to find a bride.

Eliezer, a type of the Holy Spirit, has a plan to find a bride. He is not just going out there and trying to do it on his own. He has a plan. Isaac stayed home. He is not even involved in it. Isaac is with the Father, a type of God the Father, Abraham. He is doing the work with his Father. The Holy Spirit of God is doing the work to find him a bride. He follows that plan right through the biblical principles, and the Holy Spirit of God gets it all together.

He wants a bride for his son who is totally involved in ministry and is pure.

He does not want some bar-hopping, social-drinking, non-conformed person, non-committed person who lives like the world while pretending to be a Christian. You want to always make sure that anybody you are going to plan on marrying down the line, you look at the baggage because their baggage will become your baggage.

You do not want a brand new Christian. You want someone who has proven themselves in ministry.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

One of the stories in here that I think is amazing is that when he sees her, she is drawing water at the well, and she gives the guy water. She is very giving to everybody, and she sees his camels. He has camels, and she says, "I will water your camels." She gets water not only for him and everybody there, but she gets the water and she takes care of the camels. She takes care of all the details. Now I have got to tell you this, camels are the hardest animals on the planet to deal with, except on Wednesday. They are the hardest animal on the planet to deal with. Think about it, hump day, you will get it. They are the hardest animals in the world to get to do anything. They will not eat when you want them to, they will not drink when you want them to. This woman has a way with animals; she is able to get them to drink. She works well with people. She is not a novice.

A partner or a spouse that will go God's way and not their own way.

When she is confronted with that, the Bible simply says, "Rebekah went his way," one of the greatest lines in the Bible. She quit going her way, and she went his way. She went to meet her Isaac. For me, that is one of the most beautiful pictures of my salvation in the Holy Spirit of God finding me, and someday I am going to be married to the Lord Jesus Christ, my Bridegroom, as the bride, the church. But in a practical way, those 19 principles show you exactly if you want to have the picture-perfect concept, because it is not good for man to be alone. Genesis 24 is the complete study and breakdown, one that when followed will save you a lot of heartache.

Genesis 24 and these 19 principles will boil down into a single little balance that I want to give you. These 19 principles, we can take those and compress them down into a very simple little fundamental rule to follow of a balance. When you look at somebody, you can take all of these things and put them into these three little outlines.

7. Is that person really a Christian? Or are they just a "lay of the sea" and want to be?

They are easy to spot. Without getting doctrinal or technical, there are five areas of the fundamentals of my relationship with Christ or anybody's relationship with Christ. There are five things that true salvation demands. If you do not see them, then you start to question it. You take those five fundamental things and you bring them right over into the marriage relationship.

Once you understand that the person is saved, now I have got to tell you, that is usually where everybody stops. They have been pounded in their head so many times, "Do not marry an unsaved person. Do not marry an unsaved person." "Hi, you are a darn many hot dogs. Are you saved?" "Yes, I am." "I will marry you." "Boy, you are saved." I have heard them tell me, "Yeah, he is saved," or "She is saved." They were no more saved than my dogs were saved. But when you need somebody to be saved because you want to justify what you want to do, they are saved. That is short term; it is all long term. Why? Why did I buy that Volkswagen bus with the hippie graffiti on the side and the flower child on the back? The transmission that leaked. The engine. It was a mess. Now I see over here, look at that, El Dorado.

I preached a message on Ruth and Boaz, and I said, "You wait for your Boaz to come in." But whatever you do, do not marry any of his cousins. Do not marry Lazy-as. Do not marry No-job-as. Do not marry Stupid-as. Wait for Boaz.

8. Are they involved in ministry in a New Testament church? Do they do the work of God?

I told you a couple of weeks ago, you look at pastoring. If somebody is not willing to do the ministry in the church that they are in, do not even kid yourself that they are going to do it when they go out. If a person does not tithe in the church and be part of the ministry and do everything else, "Oh, I get it. You are not going to do it here, but you are going to go out and require everybody else to do what you would not do when you were here." I know how it works. I told you back then, if a man will not do it, if he will not do it before you marry him, do not fall for the line that they will do it after you marry them.

Here are the three biggest lies they are going to get you:

9. "Oh, I will go to church after we are married."

10. "Well, after we are together, we are married. That is when I will get involved."

11. "Oh, yeah, he is saved, and yeah, or she is saved, and oh, they are really going to prove themselves after we get married."

The answer to all three of those is no, no, and no.

Most people get the first one, they get the second one, "All right, they are saved, they are in ministry. Oh, I am good to go." You have got to get a threefold into balance. They are saved, they are in ministry, but here is the third one, and this is the killer.

12. Do they minister to you?

You do not need somebody in your life that is busy out there ministering to everybody else in the world, but puts you on the bottom of the list. You do not need somebody out there that is running around the world doing everything for Jesus Christ and God and doing all the great stuff, but you are sitting there with your needs, and they are not being met, and nobody is ministering to you. Now the Volkswagen bus just lost the four tires and the engine.

In a marriage relationship, a marriage relationship is an ongoing process of perfecting. I get it, much like our relationship with Christ. You have to have a perfect balance. Each person in a relationship needs to understand that both a man and a woman, they have three basic needs that

have to be met, and that is why it is important not just for the man to be saved, that is why it is important not for the man just to be involved in his church or the woman, but it is important that they are ministering in ability to each other because each person in a marriage relationship has three basic needs.

- Physical needs: time being together, time set aside for just the two of you.

A man gets his satisfaction from the success that he does in life. If you do not believe that, come and watch our softball league. A man who will knock it over the fence, he does a great play. He walks out of there, "Man, that was a great play." He plays football, "Oh, I did a great thing. Great catch, man." He gets his self-worth, nothing wrong with that. But the problem is a man thinks that a wife gets her satisfaction the same way by things that happen in her life. She does not. You get yours and I get mine because of the fact that you are successful in life. A woman gets hers by simply knowing that she is the number one thing in your life. You have got to meet those physical needs.

- Emotional needs: Women and men are not the same when it comes to their emotions.

If you have been married any time at all, you know that is true. Men are from Mars, women are from Venus. They do not look at things the same way, nor do they respond to things the same way. The number one thing when a man or woman does not know how to minister to their spouse, they can do the first two, but the primary one has to be to that person. Boy, I will tell you what, when they do not know how to do that, it is going to cause some problems.

I was at a Raytown Little League football game a number of years ago, and it was like the junior varsity, and they were playing up there, and I was just sitting up there watching them, and the woman and the man in front, their boy was playing ball. They had his jersey on with his name and his number on it. He was a pretty good little ball player. He is a quarterback. At one play, I am sitting there watching it, and I thought to myself, when it all happened, "This is textbook. This is exactly what I try to tell people." The kid got the ball, snapped the ball to him, went around this way, play broke down, went around this way. He could not get rid of the ball. He tried left, he tried right. About four big guys just clobbered him, just buried him. Right in front of me, both of them stood up, mom and the dad. The mom stood up and said, "Oh, oh no, they are going to kill my boy." The dad said, "Tell them, right, boy, give it to them." They saw the same event, the same thing, and responded two different ways. You know what? Because emotionally, they are not wired the same.

The quicker you learn, women have an emotional level, one to ten, ten to twenty. The quicker you find out before you are married which one that is and decide, "Can you manage it?" the better off you are. I am telling you. I am telling you. Just the way it is. Trying to deal with your wife's emotional needs or have emotional needs like you do your own or your buddy's at work will never work. "Oh, come on, brush it off. Come on, get up and get going again. What are you crying about? Come on, suck it up." It does not work. It does not work.

Romans 15:1

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

The Bible says that the wife is the weaker vessel. This is what a husband is. He is the spiritual leader. He recognizes the weakness, and he covers them because he is supposed to be the strong. You do not have that? Do not get in it.

Genesis 3:16

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Because of the fall, the woman's desire is to her husband. You cannot meet those needs and see those things and deal with those things because she has got spiritual needs too.

- Spiritual needs: She has physical, emotional, and she has spiritual needs.

Just as a pastor, I have to meet the spiritual needs of this church. The husband has to meet the spiritual needs of his wife, and the wife needs the spiritual needs of her husband. When I do right with you guys, the church meets my spiritual needs by doing from the Word of God what God has called us all to do, and we all do it together and serve the Lord. Then together, we fulfill God's ministry together and by fulfilling each other's spiritual needs. That is the way it works. Absolutely no fulfilling any spiritual needs outside the structure of the church. Just like there is no fulfilling of the needs outside the relationship.

The husband needs to meet his wife's needs in these three areas. The wife needs to meet her husband's needs in these three areas, and you do not meet them the same way. A woman needs to have her own relationship with the Lord as a woman to Christ, and she sees and understands as the weaker vessel how she is to the Lord. The husband sees his relationship with Christ, and he sees how he is to be with Christ and his relationship, and he takes that, she takes that, models it to each other. Bang! Presto! You have got what God intended you to have. A failure in this balance will spell disaster.

Fundamentally, this is why Christian marriage has failed. There may be a thousand symptoms in a relationship that they talk about. "These are my problems." But I guarantee you it will come back down to these three things. In marital counseling, dealing with people, you do not ever worry about all of the symptoms that everybody wants to talk about. You go straight to where the problem is, and the problem will lie in one of these three things.

Divorce is an easy option today. You see the similarities in Christianity. People look at their relationship with God the same way. There is no real understanding of what it takes to be a committed Christian. So a person falls in love with God today and then falls out of love with God tomorrow. Something better comes along, a better deal comes along, so he drops God, drops church, and goes where he is going or where she is going. It is the same way. I knew a lady one time that she is about as screwed up as it could ever be, and she started out being a Christian, then she changed from that and became a Jew, then she changed from that and became an agnostic, then she changed from that and became an atheist. Last I heard, she was a Christian again. Well, that is quite a little road to travel on. It is one of those things where you see the same things. Marriage is the same thing. There is no commitment. They get in when they should not have gotten in with who they should have never gotten in with, and it lasts two or three years and

falls apart, and then they move on to another mess right after one mess after the other. I had a lady one time years ago; she was married seven times. Now I realize once, twice, okay. I mean, it happened. I get it. But after the second or third time, you start to wonder there are some relationship issues here. After seven, I do not even know what to say. It will continue to go on and on and on, one after the other.

Again, the most important decision you will ever make after salvation is the day you become one with Christ. After that is the day you become one with whoever God puts in your life or whoever you put in your life yourself. The second most important question, a decision you make, is who you are going to join yourself to when it comes down to the Great Commission that God has given you.

VII. Conclusion and Application

Let me close this out by saying a couple of things here, and we will be done. Whatever your situation is, wherever you find yourself today, when you want to do the right thing and you want to work through your scenario and you want to get a plan to make it work, then there is a way to do that. I have never known an impossible situation in a Christian's life other than what makes it impossible that as a Christian it will not do what is right. The road to doing right will maybe be harder than normal. That may be strewn with potholes; it may be a struggle. Having a dead spouse, spiritually speaking, is like trying to run a mile race with a dead person on your back. I get it. I get it. But it can be done. There are ways to get it done, and it weighs, as the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 7, to try to get the spouse saved. I have seen many people do it. It is the situation that you have got to get a plan. You have got to get a biblical plan. Even though it may be hard, and it may be taxing, and it may take a lot of energy and a lot of strength, that is what you have got to do if you are going to do it.

Where a husband wants to do right and the wife does not, it is somewhat easier to deal with because obviously the father is the spiritual head of the home, so he has some advantage to that. Where the wife wants to do right and the husband will not, then it is many times, if not most times, a much harder situation. But it can be done. The church, our structure, the support system that God has provided for us, is vital in accomplishing this.

I say all that, but I go back to my original point. As for all you young kids out here that are contemplating getting married or want to get married someday, or maybe you are young and you do not even think about it now, but you will pretty quickly. The best situation for you and you single kids is do not make the mistake of a wrong relationship outside God and His infallible principles. Do not settle for a Camaro when your desire is a Corvette. Save your money, wait it out, make sure you get your heart's desire. Do not buy something just because you want something fast and loose that will get you where you want to go without looking at the long-term consequences of the cost involved of getting there.

This today will end our series on having a balance in your life. We have covered everything you need to get everything in order. Now you need to go to work on these and all of them, not just this one, and get them working in your life. They will make all the difference in everything you

do and make it a lot easier in life. When I talk about living above the circumstances, when I talk about overcoming, when I talk about the victorious Christian life, I am talking about a life without issues and problems. I am talking about a life based on the biblical principles that form a balance in your life to deal with any issue that comes into your life.

You are going down to the mission tonight. I have told you this before. If you are an observant person down there, if you have been going down there for a while, as most of us have, it is no wonder, and you see it all the time, that their favorite song, their favorite song they like to sing. They will sing every song, but when you turn to this page and you sing it, the whole place just lights up. You know what song it is? "Victory in Jesus." You know why that is their favorite song? Because so desperately that is what those men want. They want a victory in their life. Many of them have lost everything in life, lost their families, they have lost their friends, they have lost their job, they have lost anything that they ever had. Many times the strongholds in their life. But they have lost everything, and they so desperately desire the victory that only comes through Jesus Christ. You and I, no matter what your situation is, I do not care. You cannot be so black that God will not give you the victory. But it comes down to you and me wanting to do what the Bible says and being consistent in doing what needs to be done. That is what it takes. It is up to us to apply what we get from God and to keep it moving and keep it moving forward and keeping the balance. It is not enough just to have the balance in these things. I have now shown you how to maintain the balance in these things.

So we will hold up there, and we will have a word of prayer here, and we will be dismissed.

Father, we thank and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, these are some of the best people on the planet. Lord, there are so many young men and young women here that have so much to offer You. Though I stand here and see the potential, Lord, right behind me the devil stands, and he also sees their potential. While I try to do everything to give them the truth to help them be everything that God wants them to be, he is going to try to put everything in their world to get them to take control of it, to lose everything that God has for them. Most of them have joined themselves to You, and they are Your children. Help protect them at the second joining of their life is to somebody just like You. Help us. Help me. Help us as a church to build strong young men, young couples that love You, love the Word of God, that stand faithful to it. Do the work of the ministry that we here might fulfill the commission that God has given us to spiritually win men and women to Christ. Help us to do it with everything that we do. Help us, Father, to train men and women to do it well. Lord, help us to take young couples that want to get married and help to give them the best shot we can to have everything that they can be to help meet each other to fulfill the calling that You have given them. Lord, we do thank You and praise You now in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you. You are dismissed.