

The Family Time

October 26, 2014

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*Proverbs 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
Proverbs 2:2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, [and] apply thine heart to understanding;
Proverbs 2:3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, [and] liftest up thy voice for understanding;
Proverbs 2:4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures;
Proverbs 2:5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.*

Today, we continue to look at the business of courtship and the decision making that is so frequently flawed. As we saw in our last session,

- 1.** Two persons become acquainted;
- 2.** They are infatuated with each other, and their whole attention is absorbed. *{AH 71.3}*

The absorption is so complete, that serious matters are very rarely discussed. Listen to what *Review and Herald, September 25, 1888 par. 9* has to say about this.

- 1.** Night after night, these young people burn the midnight oil to talk with each other,--in reference to subjects of serious and solemn interest?--O no. Rather of frivolous things, that are of no importance.
- 2.** Satan's angels are keeping watch with those who devote a large share of the night to courting.
- 3.** Could they have their eyes opened, they would see an angel making a record of their words and acts.
- 4.** The laws of health and modesty are violated. It would be more appropriate to let some of the hours of courtship before marriage run through the married life.
- 5.** But as a general thing, marriage ends all the devotion manifested during the days of courtship.
- 6.** These hours of midnight dissipation, in this age of depravity, frequently lead to the ruin of both parties thus engaged.
- 7.** Satan exults, and God is dishonored when men and women dishonor themselves.
- 8.** The good name of honor is sacrificed under the spell of this infatuation, and the marriage of such persons cannot be solemnized under the approval of God.
- 9.** They are married because passion moved them, and when the novelty of the affair is over, they will begin to realize what they have done.
- 10.** In six months after the vows are spoken, their sentiments toward each other have undergone a change.
- 11.** Each has learned in married life more of the character of the companion chosen.
- 12.** Each discovers imperfections that, during the blindness and folly of their former association, were not apparent.
- 13.** The promises at the altar do not bind them together.
- 14.** In consequence of hasty marriages, even among the professed people of God, there are separations, divorces, and great confusion in the church. *{RH, September 25, 1888 par. 9}*



Listen to how RH, September 25, 1888 par. 10 continues:

- 1.** This kind of marrying and giving in marriage is one of Satan's special devices, and he succeeds in his plans almost every time.
- 2.** I have the most painful sense of helplessness when parties come to me for counsel upon this subject.
- 3.** I may speak to them the words that God would have me; but they frequently question every point, and plead the wisdom of carrying out their own purposes; and eventually they do so.
- 4.** They seem to have no power to overcome their own wishes and inclinations, and will marry at all hazards.
- 5.** They do not consider the matter carefully and prayerfully, leaving themselves in the hands of God, to be guided and controlled by his Spirit.
- 6.** The fear of God does not seem to be before their eyes.
- 7.** They think they understand the matter fully, without wisdom from God, or counsel from man.
- 8.** When it is too late, they find that they have made a mistake, and have imperiled their happiness in this life and the salvation of their souls.
- 9.** They would not admit that anyone knew anything about the matter but themselves, when if counsel had been received, they might have saved themselves years of anxiety and sorrow.
- 10.** But advice is only thrown away on those who are determined to have their own way.
- 11.** Passion carries such individuals over every barrier that reason and judgment can interpose. *{RH, September 25, 1888 par. 10}*

For those contemplating marriage, this counsel is invaluable. For those of you not yet contemplating marriage, the counsel is essential to prepare your choices for the future. For those of you who are already married, perhaps the counsel explains some of the difficulties already experienced. But do not despair. God is ever present. Remember the quote we read from Manuscript Release 13, page 139.1?

“What human wisdom cannot do, the wisdom of God can do through the surrender of the will, the mind, the soul, the strength, the entire being, to God. His providence can unite hearts in bonds that are of heavenly origin. But the result will not be a mere external interchange of affection in soft and flattering words. There will be a new experience; the loom of heaven weaves with warp and woof finer, yet more firm, than those of earth. The material is not a mere tissue fabric but a texture that will bear the wear and test of trial; heart is bound to heart in the golden chain of a love that is genuine.” - *{13MR 139.1}*