

How Young People in the Church are to Relate to Each other

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This subject is one very dear to my heart for many, many reasons. I'll start very close to home. I've had two children be married out of very youthful relationships in this church. And so I've seen such benefit to the way that they engaged in that time of being in a church together as single young people, and how they conducted themselves, had various principles associated with the relationships. And I look back with such joy for the way that that happened. And you know, we here, in this church, are about a number of things. One of the things that we are doing is that we are attempting to recover a lost doctrine, the Biblical doctrine of the family. And that includes manhood, and womanhood. It includes marriage. We're engaging fatherhood differently than the vast population in our land. We are engaging womanhood differently. We are engaging issues of the family in a way that's distinct. In many ways, we are a set apart people in this realm, because we are not doing what normal evangelicalism is doing. In a way, we are like, and there is a little culture here in this church, a small enclave of hope and faithfulness, and we're seeing things that we have never seen before. We're seeing God bless it. We're seeing things happen in our children's lives that we are so grateful for. And this subject of how young people relate to each other, unmarried young people relate to each other in a church, is all part of that. How do you recover what is true and good for the times when people are single? And particularly, how do you do that in the church, especially in a culture that seems to be running roughshod into whatever direction that might feel good. We're not doing that, at least, we're trying not to do that, and we're trying to look at scripture and ask ourselves, "What kind of culture should we build for healthy relationships for young people," number one. And "What do we do to prepare them for marriage, and how do we see them through that period so that they are married and then off on their own?" And it's been a joy to be a part of that.

Well, here's another reason I love this subject. There's a young lady sitting right to my right on the front row who was a young girl in the church that I was in, and she was thirteen, and I was twenty. And I noticed her. I actually noticed her when she was thirteen. I'm not going to ask the thirteen year old girls to raise their hands right now, but you just have to understand that God puts people together in churches for a reason. And you have no idea who those people might be connected with you as husband and wife. Just quite frankly, Taylor S., he was my bosom buddy. I mean, we went everywhere together. David, and he, and I rode the range all over the place for many years. I never dreamed he would be the husband of my daughter. I never dreamed it. Not until he came

to me. I never thought of it. I mean, I thought so highly of him, but there are things unexpected can happen according to the sovereignty of God.

So, this is a fantastic subject. And you know, what began with Deborah when she was a very young girl, flourished into such a wonderful blessing in both of our lives. And you never know how God's going to bless you through a local church and the relationships that are established there. And so, in our church we want to be, as best we know how, to be governed by Scripture. We know we are very imperfect in every area of our church life, but let's not just do what seems right in every man's eyes. Let's try to look at Scripture and be governed by that. And so, I hope that the things that I'm going to bring here today are about that. But I just wanted to begin this by saying, "I love this subject. This is fantastic. And I've been blessed so much by the ways that God works in a local church for the marriages of the rising generation."

So, how we treat one another as single young people matters a lot. I'm going to give you three texts to consider of Scripture, and then I want to charge through a number of issues. And the texts are Titus 2. You can just write these down. Titus 2:6-7. 1 Timothy 5:1-2. And 1 Timothy 4:16. And I'll read them.

Titus 2:6-7. "Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded." That has a lot to do with how young people relate to one another. "In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you." That passage basically says the way that young men conduct themselves in their speech, in their conduct, in everything is designed by God for a purpose beyond what you might think. Of course, there are many wonderful effects of that if young men are like this, sober minded, showing a pattern of good works, integrity, and all of this kind of thing. But here we learn in Titus that there is a specific purpose, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed having nothing evil to say about you because if your young people aren't governed right, you will be ashamed of the way that your young people are operating. And they can say evil things about you. So our testimony in the community rests on the way that particularly the young men handle themselves in a local church with the young ladies regarding their relationships as brothers and sisters. So, it's an issue that has implications beyond our own local church life.

And then there is 1 Timothy 5:1-2. "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity." This just indicates that there are various kinds of people in a local church, and you relate to them on the basis of where they are in their life. You relate to old men in a certain way, and the brothers and the sisters in the church relate to one another in a certain way. The older women are teaching the younger women. There is a particular relationship juxtaposition that is appropriate. So there are various kinds of relationships, and in a church you have to understand who you are and who the person you relating to is. It matters.

And then 1 Timothy 4:16. "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine." And, "let no man despise your youth, but be thou an example of believers in word." So, this brings up the principle of the youth being an example. So, youth have a responsibility to be an example to the flock and to one another for godly purposes.

So those three texts give us sort of a broad range. And I want to try to answer the question: how should young men and women treat one another in the church, and how should they engage their relationships? Should they act as if they don't exist, like should the girls act like the boys don't exist? Should they speak to them only when they are spoken to? Should the girl seek out the young men to befriend them, or vice versa? Those are questions that really need to be considered. If they do speak to them, how should they speak to them? How should they be thinking in their minds, their hearts? We just talked about the heart and how pivotal things are that are happening in the heart. This subject is really part of the discussion that we had an hour and a half ago regarding Matthew chapter 5.

But let's talk about the elephant in the room for a minute. You know, there's this big elephant in the room. I think we all know it's there. It's here. And we want to recognize here that there are many wonderful young men and women in this room who will someday be married. And I just want to recognize that for some it will be sooner, for others it will be later. Maybe a number of years for some, but you never know. It may be inside of a year for many who don't even know it today. And we want to make sure that we're not ignoring this reality, acting as if it doesn't exist, acting as if there is no elephant in the room when there is. And so, it's right for us to consider the subject because in God's kindness and providence, there are many who are ready for marriage among us and I am so delighted about that. It gives me chills. It makes me giggle. It makes me happy to think of it. But how the culture of this church operates in terms of the ways that young men and women consider one another really, really matters. It matters a lot to me. I think it probably matters a lot to you as well and so, we want to try to create in our church a culture of exemplary relationships. Relationships that are built according to principles of Scripture, and Scripture alone. We don't want to be like our culture. We want to be like something better than our culture. This is the kingdom of heaven. God is establishing a different kingdom here in this church and that kingdom exists in the way that the young people relate with one another, and it will have an enormous impact on their relationships later on. And so it really is a very blessed subject.

Okay. So, I am going to talk about seven relational malfunctions that we want to avoid in this church. Seven relational malfunctions. And when I say malfunction, I mean a malfunctioning in terms of Scripture. Things that just don't fit with Scripture. Relational malfunction number one. No relationships between the single and unmarried people in the church. That's a malfunction. It's a malfunction when you find an atmosphere in a church where the young people, the young men and women, are kind of like magnets. You know how you have magnets that are opposite, and there is always a certain distance. If you get them close, they just go away and often, that's what happens in churches for different reasons. Sometimes, that is fueled by a fear of emotional

entanglement. And it is true, our relationships can spin out of control, and you can end up with two broken hearts, or one broken heart, one mad person, whatever.

And so, this often is an overreaction and causes people, a culture, a bad culture in a church where single young people don't relate to one another properly. But the church is not designed that way. The church is designed as a body. It's designed as a family. You talk to your family members. You're around your family members. And so, this magnetic force is wrong, and it creates a sociology that is unbiblical, because it totally defeats the very nature of the church as fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters, and things like that. Jesus said, "I call you friends." There should be friendships in the church. And so, it's wrong to create a culture where there are no relationships. And so, if you have a church where the single young people are too nervous about talking to one another, then you're creating something that is a real distortion of church life. It is something that God has defined very, very clearly. You know, there are many kinds of considerations that you have to bring into your mind. Well, here is one: A companion of fools suffers harm. That means that you shouldn't be friends with everybody. You shouldn't be near it. There are fools in our church that you should probably stay away from. And so, there is a wisdom that has to be engaged.

I'll never forget when my son, David, was younger. I would have fathers come up to me, and they would say, "You know, I would really like your son David to mentor my son." And I would have to hold myself back from falling on the floor laughing, because my son is not ready to mentor anyone when he is seven years old. That's not his shtick in life. He's not ready. He's immature. He wasn't a fool of the kind that would be dangerous, but do you know what? He's still too young to be mentoring. He's just not ready for it. You have to think rightly about things. There's readiness for certain kinds of things and not readiness for other kinds of things, and you have to recognize that.

If you have a church where young people who are unmarried cannot talk, you put pressures that are really inappropriate. Like, for example, if you have no interaction, you may end up with a place where the girls feel like their only hope is just to dress in a way to attract attention, because they can't talk to anybody. They can't use their minds to get to know someone. They're going to have to use their appearance. That's all they have. So, they may think that that's the only way they can catch a man, and that's actually not the way to catch a man.

So, a church should be characterized by biblical sociology where relationships are defined and they're governed by Scripture. Here's another malfunction: awkward relationships. The first one is no relationships, and then awkward relationships where people don't really understand their responsibilities in relationships. They don't understand that we all have duties in our relationships. Duties of kindness. There are so many biblical commands that tell us how we should operate with people. You can have a church culture where it become a gigantic deal if a young man and a single young woman talk together, and then everybody in the church is watching, "Oh! Are they courting?" "Oh! I wonder what's happening!" Well, that's a really unhealthy kind of situation. It just causes awkwardness in relationships.

Now, nobody ever gets married without awkwardness in relationships. I think we just need to acknowledge that, but there is a kind of awkwardness in the culture of a church where if two single people are talking there is a gasp in the room, and everyone is looking at them, and who wants to be in an environment like that? Would you want to be in an environment like that if God was doing something to connect you with someone for marriage, or friendship, or brotherhood, or sisterhood? We are brothers and sisters after all, and brothers and sisters by implication should be talking to one another and typically, brothers and sisters don't talk in an awkward way. They talk in a natural way. It's free, yet governed by Scripture.

Here's another malfunction: flirtatious relationships; when there is a flirtatious spirit, or literally an adulterous spirit. This can happen as well. And in the culture of our church, we're praying that God would banish a flirtatious spirit in the church where either young men or young women are scheming and conniving wrongly rather than trusting in the sovereignty of God for the putting together of the relationship. God is big enough to get you connected with the person He wants you to be connected with.

I hope no one doubts that. You can live in the smallest town in the world, and God is bigger than that small town, and He can get you connected with the right person. And the same thing in this church. We don't to scheme, and flirt, and things like that. When we think we see flirtation, believe me, the elders of this church will have absolutely no problem talking to people about it. We will not be retiring about it. We will go after it, big time. So, if you have a flirtatious spirit, just be put on notice. Dan Horn and I are coming after you. We really are. It's really bad news.

Number four. Another relational malfunction is purposeless relationships where there is no objective. There is no goal. There is no godly communication. It is just chatting aimlessly about whatever. Now, please don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I'm not saying that it's sinful to just talk about the weather. I'm not saying that it's sinful to have a casual conversation about normal things in life, but what I am saying is that if that's all you talk about are meaningless things, and there is no determinative prayerful "I'm here to build up my brother or my sister in Christ," then that's a malfunction. Whenever the single young people speak in this church, our prayer is that they're speaking words of life to one another, they're being a blessing to one another. They're engaging in conversations that build up rather than tear down, that go forward in godly things, so that their conversation is built around the beautiful things that are here. So that their intent is upon the building up of the spiritual account of the person that they're speaking with rather than trying to be someone or trying to get something from that person, but they are there to fulfill their role rather than just to have a purposeless relationship.

The fifth relational malfunction I'm going to call selfish defrauding relationships. Selfish defrauding relationships where there are selfish motives involved, and single people are relating to one another on the basis of their own selfish motives rather than in order to do what they were designed to do. They were created for a blessing. And there are all kinds of problems that result from selfish defrauding relationships: broken hearts, broken relationships, shallowness, sensuality, foolishness, exploited relationships. When boys

are little, they're pulling girls' hair, and kicking them, and chasing them and teasing them. That's just as inappropriate when you're three as it is when you're thirteen or thirty-three. We should be engaging in relationships that are not defrauding and have a culture like that. That means that if you have children under ten, you know, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, you should be teaching them how to relate to the sisters in the church. Now, it may be that you've not taught them how to relate to their own sisters yet, and they don't treat their own sisters right, and that's the problem, and they treat the sisters here wrong, because they never learned how to treat their own sister right. My guess is probably some of you have some work to do, some catch up to do to teach your sons how to relate to a sister. And believe me, if they can't relate to the sister they have now, they won't be able to relate to the sister they'll have later either.

Here's a maxim, a principle that I think we all need to acknowledge: who you are at home is who you really are. Don't think that your son is going to be different to girls than he is to your daughters. Who he is with his family is who he really is, and that's really, really important for you to get. That just helps us to understand where we begin this whole matter of preparing our children to relate with the opposite gender. It begins with the relationships at home. Honorable, godly, determinative, purposeful relationships in the home are really, really important for this. Jonathan Sides has this great message that he's given around here a couple of times, how to prepare your two year old for marriage. Well, he's speaking some wisdom, because preparing your children for marriage if it starts at eighteen or twenty, it's a little bit late. It starts way, way, way, way back. So, selfish defrauding relationships in the home often get people on a track where they just don't ever break that, and it has enormous implications.

So, because of that, do we just give up on coed relationships? No, no. We gravitate toward the antithesis, toward pure relationships rather than in flirtatious relationships. To relationships of self-control. Relationships of respect. Relationships of edification, and in joy, and friendliness, and happy and respectful kinds of interchange. So there's an alternative. We don't say, "Well, there are problems in this area therefore, the young people in our church should not have relationships." No, that's the wrong answer. The right answer is to fulfill the relational commands of God in our church life.

Number six here is the sixth malfunction, I am going to call it age segregated relationships. People often think, "Well, why can't we just get the young people together? Why can't we get the twenty somethings together to have fellowship?" Why do we think that the older and the younger should always be excluded? Why do we think that? The problem with that kind of thinking is that it produces an unbiblical sociology. It creates a sociology that you never see in Scripture. So that's why you won't see us as elders doing very much organizing like that. While there will be times when there will be some older, you know, young people getting together and things like that, it will never become a programmatic way that we do our church. We will never systematize that here. What we do want to do is provide a sociology that we clearly do see in Scripture and clearly what you see is an intergenerational sociology in the church. That's actually better for the twenty somethings than to jam them all in a room. That's our understanding of the ways that God gathers His people together in Scripture. If anyone has found a place in

Scripture where this kind of thing happens, I would love to see it. I don't think it's here. I've never seen anything like it. The only time I'm aware of when young people got together, you know, bears ate them and killed them. That's the only example I know of in Scripture where the young people gathered together. It's an unnatural sociology.

Our question is, when people ask us, "Hey, can't we get the twenty somethings together?" is, "Why would you want to have a contrived social circumstance that you never see patterned in the Bible? Why would you want to do that? Why would you want to create something that's actually unnatural and forces something that doesn't really exist in Scripture?" We are going to judge that as a twisted sociology. So, while we would say it is appropriate for the single people to be together, they should be in an intergenerational environment. Does that mean that they can never ever be together? No, I'm not saying that, but as a general rule and pattern, we're going to look for an intergenerational environment for all of our people and not isolate. So, age segregated relationships we would judge to be a relational malfunction.

And then number seven. The seventh relational malfunction is inappropriate communication between the unmarried. We live in a culture where there are no barriers between the genders. So because of that, immodesty reigns, inappropriate relationships reign, premature uniting of hearts reigns, a dating kind of culture reigns. And that's pretty much the normal way of the world, and it's inappropriate communication between the unmarried, communication that goes beyond where it ought to go. While there should be a closeness between brothers and sisters, it cannot be a wrong kind of closeness.

So those are some of the malfunctions. Now, I want to elaborate on this malfunction of inappropriate communications because we live in what I'm just going to call a communications intensive society, different than the one that I actually grew up in, because there are so many different ways to communicate today that didn't exist. Typically, in history, people communicated face to face. Now, they communicate face to facebook, or through a telephone, or through some form of internet communications, whether it be email, or texting, or something like that. The culture of our church will be very, very different from the culture probably of any church that you've been in regarding this whole matter of email and texting, because we're going to make some recommendations here today that will probably, they might be offensive, they might sound strange, but I hope that I'll have enough time to explain why we think these things are really important. There is a certain kind of communication that is not appropriate before marriage. And there are certain kinds of communication methods that enhance the problems of those kinds of communication methods.

Now, here's a principle that I want us to begin with, and this is really kind of a touchstone principle that will help you understand why we feel so strongly about this. When you think about communication, and communication between unmarried people, you should always think about what kind of communication is appropriate and inappropriate with people who are married. For example, there is an appropriate kind of communication that I can have with my wife that is not appropriate for me to have with other women. There are ways of communicating, there are things to say that are, on the one hand, very

appropriate with someone I am married to, and very inappropriate with someone I am not married to: someone I am not yoked to, someone I am not betrothed to, or anything like that. There is a different way that you communicate, and the question that I want us to ask is: if you would be uncomfortable with your father doing this with another woman, then it should be uncomfortable for you. Now, let's just say that you're a twelve year old boy, and you want to send a text message to a twelve year old girl. Would you be comfortable if your father texted another woman? Would you be comfortable with him sending an email to another woman that wasn't his wife and having back and forth communications throughout the day, informing them of what you're doing in the day? It wouldn't be appropriate for me to do that with another woman. "Hey, I'm headed to the office now. Hope you have a great day! Boy, isn't it a bright, sunny, wonderful day!" Would you be comfortable with that? If you are comfortable with that, I want to talk to you after this.

So, the principle that I want us to acknowledge is that young people should not do anything in communication with the opposite sex that they would not feel comfortable with their father doing to another woman. Can we all agree on that? There is a way that you relate that matters. Texting, emails, verbal communications are difficult to keep in some kind of biblical arrangement. So, number one: appropriate private communication. We want a church where there is a culture of appropriate private communication. Now, we live in a kind of a sick society today where we are increasingly not dealing with one another face to face. It used to be exemplary communication was face to face, and people would not want to talk on the telephone. That's just way too distant. Now, actually talking on the telephone is kind of intimate communicate, right? If you really want to have a conversation, you call them now. That used to be sort of trash kind of relationships, because a real relationship you want to talk to somebody face to face. There has been a real drift in the way that people communicate today. And young people today are communicating in a really unhealthy way through, I'm just going to call it mindless communication. When my children were growing up, I put tremendous restrictions on this. You cannot send these ridiculous short little texts. You have to say something meaningful. There has to be something of import and significance. This just back and forth kind of talking is not healthy communication. It doesn't promote edification and those kinds of things.

What does appropriate private communication look like? My experience from my conversations with many, many church leaders, and also experience here in our church is that when especially the younger unmarried people in the church start texting and emailing, you've got trouble. All kinds of things happen that should not happen. Fires are lit prematurely. People misunderstand what the other person meant. They think someone is in love with them, and someone is not in love with them. They're thirteen. No one should be in love with them. No one should be expressing that now. It lights all kinds of fires. We're going to encourage you to not allow your children to text and email one another in this church. It's not a law. We're not in control of your home, but as far as the culture of this church, particularly with the young people, we do not want them communicating this way, because we don't want them prematurely lighting fires. We do not want them dishonoring one another by unimportant meaningless communication. We

don't want them to be sending messages that aren't carefully thought through and have a real godly purpose in them and so, it's just a wrong direction. If you're older, I think that's a little bit different. I think it's a little bit different, but for those who are under your father's household and authority, we want you to be extremely vigilant about this whole thing.

I could tell stories of problems, some heartbreaking ones, because people who were too young, too immature, too unaware of communication have hurt one another greatly and whole families have been really hurt and defiled. Rumors get spread. All kinds of things happening. We don't think that generally the teens in our church are mature enough for this. So, you may not agree with that statement, but I think the principle is: if you would be uncomfortable with your father sending a message to another woman, then you should be uncomfortable with sending a message to an unmarried person as well so that you don't light the fires.

Appropriate public communication. This is in terms of teasing, and innuendo, and things like that. We're praying for a culture where there's not that kind of communication, but there's principle communication that's fitting according to Scripture. And then I want to talk about the principle of readiness. I think we need to train particularly our daughters, and our sons, to have certain kinds of responses. When someone too young approaches them, they need to say, "You're not ready to be married. You can't talk to me that way. You need to go back into your cave until it's time for you to be married." Our encouragement to families is that you're not ready to shop until you're ready to buy. You're not ready to go talk to the young ladies in the church in a serious manner until you're ready to be married. You have no business trying to win the heart of someone you're not ready to put your money where your mouth is. So, if there are young men here and they come to us, and they say, "I'm really interested in So-and-so, but I'm not ready to get married," our counsel is: forget her. Forget her until you're ready. She doesn't exist. Pray for her. Pray for yourself, but you're going to have to keep a stiff upper lip, but do not try approach that girl and try to win her heart, and try to let her know that you're really interested in her. That's our counsel. Let's wait. Let's have the young men and the young women wait until they are ready before they engage in those kinds of relationships. That's the whole principle of readiness.

And then there is the principle of discretion and timing in speech. Some thoughts should not be verbalized. A thought verbalized has enormous power, and so particularly the younger people in the church, I'm not talking about the twenty something adults who are in a whole different world here, they need to understand that there is an appropriate way to speak to the other gender and it should be governed by the principles of Scripture.

I want to talk about a number of things like coed sports. I want to talk about that for a minute. It's our position that there are some kinds of coed sports that might be inappropriate for our young people to engage in together and there are some that are probably appropriate, but we want you to be thinking clearly about this and be thinking principally about it. There's certain kinds of coed sports where young men and young

women are put in a situation where they are with one another where female clothing is not as modest as it ought to be because the activity requires a certain kind of clothing. For example, the combination of tight fitting tops and sporting pants and the activity of running can present problematic situations.

So the standard for young men to exhort the younger women as sisters with all purity, it's an important standard, and it extends to this principle of how we think about coed kinds of sporting activity. We don't believe that all sporting activity leads to compromise, but there are certain types of sporting activities that can make the objective of preserving modesty a real challenge. So we want to encourage appropriate interaction between young men and young women in the congregation by providing, when it's necessary, boundaries to preserve modesty in situations like that. This is consistent with Paul's exhortation to flee youthful lusts. So that's one issue is that there can be situations where there are modesty problems with certain kinds of coed sports.

Secondly, it can force situations, coed sports can force situations where the way that males and females relate to each other can easily cause what we're going to call various manhood and womanhood compromises in terms of relating as male and female and as brother and sister. What we want to suggest is that the sisters are by nature weaker vessels, they're different, and that should govern the way that we treat them. For example, there are certain kinds of gender combined sports where it is often necessary for the men to relate to the women as men and treat them as men, to treat them as manly competitors. In an extreme way, they might have to knock them down to win, or they might have to take something from them. They might have to treat them in a way that we would suggest might not be appropriate in treatment of the distinction of genders. There is a certain way that you treat one who is a weaker vessel. It is different than the way that you treat a man. We don't have any issue with a man tackling a man. We would have a significant issue with a man tackling a woman, or to treat her in a way that is not appropriate to her gender and her station in life. Now, I know we all grew up in a tomboy world where nobody ever thought about this, and that this is probably very shocking to hear something like this, but if you think that it's appropriate for a young man to tackle a young woman, we would just want to appeal to you that there really are gender distinctions and they really matter and how we treat one another in organized sporting activities should fulfill things that we know are true about the creation order.

So, this whole matter of coed sports, we just want you to be very careful to consider it as elders of the church. The same thing has to be considered with coed swimming. I happen to have a lake where it's just wonderful. I was swimming in it yesterday. It was so wonderful, but there are certain kinds of apparel that are appropriate and not appropriate in a swimming environment, particularly when it is coed swimming. Several years ago, I wrote an article entitled "Why I'm Against Bikini Clad Girls and Bare Chested Young Men Swimming in My Ponds." It's on the internet. You can google that, and it will probably come up. Modest dress should extend to swimming. It's really challenging in the water to have modest dress. Really challenging. I've got a bunch of daughters. I know. So, if you can't overcome the challenges, you have to figure out whether it's a worthy activity or not, or whether you should do it. There are a number of principles that we're

really trying to deal with here. People want rules. They want a twelve step process. We're trying to give principles that relate to areas where we think just need to be considered in order to have a culture that's defined and governed by Scripture.

Okay. I'm going to give you five practical solutions right now, and then we'll be done. So, the first is: understand your role in the church. The unmarried in the church need to understand that they have a role to play in that church, and that role should govern the way that they relate with the other unmarried people in that church. That's why Paul said to Timothy, "Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine. Let no man despise your youth, but be an example of believers in word." So, your position in the church from your youth up is to act in a certain way to be an example to other believers.

Number two, the second solution: treat the young girls like sisters. Paul gives an example of home life to illustrate how people should treat one another in the church. Again, it's back to this whole thing of how your children are treating one another in your home is the training ground for how you teach them to do that in the church. You might be a young girl and say, "My brother is always putting spiders on my plate. Is that how brothers are supposed to treat sisters?" That's what it was like for my wife when she was growing up. Her brothers did all kinds of things to her they shouldn't have done. I think we've got to consider our families and teach our children how to relate to one another there.

Treat the young girls like sisters, and then be strategic and serious about your relationships. Be strategic and serious. This whole matter of sober mindedness, and sound doctrine, showing integrity, reverence, sound speech, these words, every single word there that I just brought out of Titus 2:6-7 should help us define how the unmarried should treat one another in this church. These things destroy flirting. They destroy shunning. They destroy ignoring. They destroy teasing. They destroy over attention. Those things in Titus 2 really wage war against a lot of the malfunctions that you find in churches. Godly conversations in all relationships. Proper use of the tongue. A spirit of honor and respect. Veering away from silliness in relationships. Not putting one another down. Not ungodly teasing, but rather godliness.

Number four, fourth solution: apply the one anothers in all relationships. Apply the one anothers in all relationships. Single people in the church need to understand that the one anothers are so helpful to them. These are commands for all of us in the church, and there are over fifty one anothers. I'll just read some of them to you. I won't be able to read them all. "Be at peace with one another." "Love one another." "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love." "Live in harmony with one another." "Accept one another just as Christ has accepted you." "Stop passing judgment on one another." "When you come together to eat, wait for each other." "Have equal concern for each other." "Serve one another in love." "Carrying one another's burdens." "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying one another." "Be patient, bearing one another, and bearing with one another in love." "Be kind and compassionate to one another." "Speaking to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." "Submitting to one another out of reverence to Christ." "Teach one another." "Admonish one another." "Build each other up." "Spur one another on to love and good deeds." "Do not slander one another." "Confess your sins to

one another." "Pray for one another." "Greet one another with a holy kiss." No! Don't do that! No kissing! That's figurative language for godly affection. "Offer hospitality to one another." "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." "Love one another." These are among others. All of these are applicable for the kind of culture that we want to build in the way that unmarried young people operate in the church.

And then, fifth, in terms of solutions: exercise purity in all relationships, fleeing immorality, keeping a close watch on your heart if there are adulterous kinds of thoughts, to quickly repent of those things. Again, those things begin in the heart. And we should be keeping close watch over our hearts. It's really, really critical.

So, those are some of the things that we think are important regarding the kind of culture that should exist in the young people as they relate to one another, whether they're on the young side, or even on the older side. I think it should be obvious to everyone that there are some differences with those who are in their teens, or younger teens, or younger than those who are older. As maturity takes place, there really are some differences, and I just want to make sure everybody understands that we embrace that idea. So there you have it. Creating a culture that facilitates godliness. That facilitates the kinds of marriages that would be ongoing blessings in the world from one generation to the next. That's really our hope and it begins in your house when you're training your children how to be siblings together.

Okay. Let's pray, and then I'll open it up for some questions.

Father, I thank you that you have given us many commands to help us know how we ought to relate with one another. I want to give thanks to you. I'm so grateful for the way that the unmarried in this church conduct themselves. I am so thankful for them, Lord. You have done a good work, and I want to just give praise and honor unto you. I pray that you would bless all those and reward them for their faithfulness. Amen.