

FIRST COMES LOVE
A Healthy Kind of Lovesick
Proverbs 4:23

Do you want to experience a LOVE that LASTS FOREVER? Of course you do! We ALL do! Everlasting love is the stuff that the sappiest and happiest ROMANCE movies are made of. It is the story of “Boy meets Girl and they live happily ever after” that inspires us to give it a go ourselves. **In fact, almost everyone believes that love OUGHT to last forever; that real love should be able to ENDURE any trouble and every test.** We long for it. We hope for it. We risk everything for it. But the REALITY is often very different. Couples come together with high hopes and beautiful dreams only to be devastated when their relationship falls apart after just a few years and a few troubles. When you look at the reality of marriage all around us in the United States today, you cannot help but be troubled.

OUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE A WRECK!

*There is INCREDIBLE PESSIMISM about the hopes of a happy marriage. [STATISTICS: (From The Meaning of Marriage, Keller). The divorce rate is twice what it was in 1960. In 1970, 89 percent of all births were to married parents, but today only 60 percent are. In 1960, 72 percent of American adults were married in 1960, but only 50 percent are today!]

*STD's are at an all-time high.

*Cohabitation is becoming as common as marriage!

But this is not a series that is intended to drive you with FEAR. Instead, I want to give you the proper BASIS for a truly HEALTHY marriage, starting with the way that you DATE. I want you to be LOVESICK in a HEALTHY kind of way! So, this series is not based on sappy movies and make-believe fairy tales. It is based upon God's eternal Word. Today, I want us to look at some PROVERBS that help us understand how we can develop healthy, life-long relationships. **We will begin with ONE PRIMARY principle that we must learn and apply THROUGHOUT our lifetime.**

GUARD your HEART! Proverbs 4:23 NLT

23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

***Your heart will determine the KIND of LIFE that you will live.**

-Your heart refers to the CORE VALUES that you adopt.

-Your heart refers to the WORLDVIEW you develop.

-Your heart refers to the ATTITUDES that you cultivate.

-Your heart refers to the PASSIONS that you embrace.

-Your heart is your VISION for your life! [Identity, Family, Career, etc.]

*Your heart is FORMED by the KEY INFLUENCES in your life.

-Family, Faith, Culture, Media, Education, + one SECRET doorway.

~The Bible always points us toward a DIRECTIONAL understanding of life:

-Based upon your PAST PERFORMANCE, where do you think you are headed RELATIONALLY? **[Player? Drama Queen? Stable and Secure?]**

*Past failure does NOT DOOM you to PRESENT and FUTURE FAILURE, IF ...
 -You CHOOSE to get on a DIFFERENT PATH!

The BEST way to guard your heart is to GIVE IT TO GOD first.

Proverbs 3:5-8 NLT

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. 7 Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.

- This will REQUIRE that you TRUST GOD in what he says!
- He promises to LEAD us, if only we will FOLLOW him.
- This will also require that you DO NOT TRUST your OWN WISDOM!
 *"Just follow your heart?" NO WAY!

*SUBMIT to his COMMANDS from your HEART. **Proverbs 7:1-3 NLT**

1 Follow my advice, my son; always treasure my commands. 2 Obey my commands and live! Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes. 3 Tie them on your fingers as a reminder. **Write them deep within your heart.**

- Develop a heart that RUNS HARD after God. "Love the Lord your God . . ."
- Don't make an IDOL out of ROMANCE

NOTES FROM COMMENTARY BY DAVID GUZIK:

- i. According to Dr. Jeffrey Schloss, there is a brain hormone that mediates the feeling of being in love or infatuation. One of these neurotransmitters is known as *phenethylamine*, and it floods our brain when we fall in love (it is also in fairly high quantities in chocolate). This chemical gives us feelings of exhilaration and thrill and well-being, and in high amounts can lead to a loss of appetite.
- ii. Some suggest that relationships have two major phases: *attraction* and *attachment*. The attraction phase is powerful, and the kind of condition that makes one say, "**I am lovesick**." Yet the key to a long-term fulfilling relationship is staying with it past the *attraction* phase into the *attachment* phase. There are some counselors who devote almost their entire counseling practice trying to help what they call "**love junkies**"; people who are so addicted to the *phenethylamine* phase that they bounce from relationship rush to relationship rush without ever really coming into a greater, longer lasting relationship fulfillment.

-Those who are consumed WITH romance are in danger of being consumed BY it!

*Make sure that you can RELEASE your relationship to God.

- PUT ROMANCE in its PROPER place! [Don't idolize romantic relationships.]
- Then, it is HIS to give away, not yours! **[When God told me to give Lisa up!]**

Guarding your heart involves growing in WISDOM.

Embrace GOD'S WISDOM as your "HEART FILTER." **Proverbs 7:4-5 NLT**

4 Love wisdom like a sister; make insight a beloved member of your family. 5 Let them protect you from an affair with an immoral woman, from listening to the flattery of a promiscuous woman.

-TRUST God's word concerning your sexual satisfaction. [Vs. 5]

Now, here is the boundary for Christians: Sex is not for consenting adults, Sex is not for those who are "in love", and Sex is not for those who are ready. Sex is for those who are MARRIED! Period. Further, romance can exist without sexual immorality. There is such a thing as a HOLY ROMANCE. You can honor God and not fall into sexual sin in a blossoming romance. And you can live without sex. Yes, you can!

So many people think that God is the great Killjoy when it comes to sex. He only wants to spoil our fun and ruin our chances at having as much pleasure as we can in this life. But the opposite is true. God, in fact, is very interested in the quality of your sex life. He invented sex, and He wants you to have the GREATEST SEX IMAGINABLE! Only, he knows that this is only possible inside of a COVENANT relationship; his moral boundaries for sex. You see, God knows the secret about how we were designed and what we are really longing for when we say that we want romance and sex. Sure, we want the pleasure and excitement that come along with sex, but what we ultimately long for is INTIMACY: KNOWING AND BEING FULLY KNOWN BY SOMEONE ELSE WITHOUT FEAR OF REJECTION! Sex, as God designed it, is RELATIONAL and SPIRITUAL. **And sex outside of a committed relationship (as C.S. Lewis says) is like chewing up a delicious meal and then spitting it out rather than swallowing! It is unsatisfying at best, and repulsive at worst!** Maybe it will help us if we learn to view these moral boundaries as something other than roadblocks in our sexual trip.

-Don't buy the LIE of current culture that sex is just physical.

*Establish "Speed bumps, Guardrails, and Roadblocks" for yourself in relationships.

-These are not INTENTIONS; they are HEALTHY HABITS.

*Guarded dating settings, Healthy mental/physical habits, Accountability

Guarding your heart means REFUSING to develop UNGUARDED relationships.

Now, our context today is about DATING and ROMANCE. But, we must remember that romance is first a FRIENDSHIP! What makes romance more dangerous is the fact that we have to throw in factors like HORMONES and emotional HAPPINESS that makes us feel like we are no longer in control of the friendship. We FALL in love, right? **[Series Title: Rick and Lisa sitting in a tree, K.I.S.S.I.N.G. Our story]** Your heart is PRECIOUS, and it SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN AWAY QUICKLY OR TO JUST ANYONE! In the N.T., Jesus said that we should not cast our pearls before swine. (I warn my kids about this all the time!) **Some relationships are not worthy of our heart!** King Solomon knew this early on, but something went terribly wrong. **The man who put this principle in writing was himself destroyed because he FAILED TO**

HONOR the truth that he told! 700 wives and 300 concubines later, he faltered in his faith, disgraced his God, and divided his country because he did not guard his heart! How does this happen? KEY PRINCIPLE:

Romantic relationships are a DOORWAY to the heart that can OVERRULE our convictions and our commitments!

WHEN WE OPEN OUR HEARTS TO SOMEONE WE GIVE THEM THE ABILITY TO BYPASS OUR DEFENSES!

- Note how teenagers “lose their minds” and do stupid stuff w/ friends.
- Singles end up getting PLAYED emotionally and physically.
- Married people wind up sacrificing their marriages!

*Friendships are a KEY to our HEALTH . . . or our SICKNESS!

-2 HEALTHY HEARTS make 1 HEALTHY MARRIAGE! **[Mules and Racehorses]**

You can only work to insure that YOU have a healthy heart, BUT . . . you can also choose to LOOK only for a mate that is working to insure that THEY have a healthy heart as well! **[Not PERFECT, but developing HEALTHY PATTERNS!]**

-Girl who chose to date and marry a man who was a rageaholic: (She said he never expressed rage at HER when they were dating, just at others. He ended up trying to kill them both!) RED FLAGS=STOP!!!!

A PICTURE OF LOVESICKNESS THAT LEADS TO DEATH: **Proverbs 7:6-21 NLT**

*Who are you getting close to right now? (Vs. 8)

-Is this relationship a SECRET? (Vs. 9)

[Rebellious dating, Hiding romance from wise friends, or Married, but . . .]

-Is this relationship drawing you away from God?

-Is this relationship drawing you away from your genuine friends; your marriage?

*A PLAYER will manipulate your emotions for their own gain. **(Vs. 10)**

-Dating is too often a matter of PLAYING WITH PEOPLE’S HEARTS!

-Her seductive dress was a false promise of intimacy! **[All guys are the same?]**

-He/She is always out looking for the next prey! **(Vs. 11-12)**

-She made him feel as if she had been looking for him all along! **(Vs. 13-18)**

-A player will focus on your sense of lack.

[You don’t feel noticed, pretty, valued, etc.]

-She made herself look like a VICTIM! **(Vs. 18-20)**

-My husband is never home and I am so lonely!

-All he cares about is his money and his career!

-I just want someone to love me!

-A “player” will NEVER HONOR A TRUE COVENANT WITH ANYONE!

If you choose to enter into a heart relationship with one who has no PATTERN of MAKING and KEEPING commitments, why would you think that they would BEGIN doing so with you?

THE FAILURE TO GUARD YOUR HEART WILL WIND UP DESTROYING YOU! (Vs. 21-26)

Today, you have a CHOICE to make: Will you guard your heart, or not?

*Give it to GOD

*Grow in WISDOM

*Refuse to develop UNGUARDED RELATIONSHIPS

No one else can choose these for you, but your FUTURE HOPES and DREAMS about romance and marriage and family HINGE upon what you ultimately decide.

Choose wisely.

Let's pray.