

Essay on
Men's Etiquette Class and Preparation for Marriage
(Nov. 13, 1987)
by
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5/3/88

(not required for Maranatha Christian Worker Status)

Guest Speakers Included:
Mary Lou Gennaro
Vicky Blaha
Minnie Gennaro
Yoli Macias (voice not audible on tape)

Introduction - Mary Lou

"We want to see you succeed in having a family and raising kids and having a good relationship with your wife." Marriage is "in everyone's emotions, everybody wants to get married someday. Unless God has given you a rhema word that you're going to be a eunuch, then you're probably not" going to be one. The revelation that we will be married someday should motivate us to prepare ourselves ahead of time for it. The practical aspects of marriage do not come naturally to us the moment we get married. "The more you can prepare before you get married, the smoother your marriage is going to be, and so that's what we want to see for you all, just smooth, successful, happy homes."

Manners – Vicky

We can help girls in many ways. We can help them carry heavy packages and open doors for them, especially when they are carrying things. We can help girls going in and out of cars. We can ask them if they would like help getting up from a chair. As guys start to practice these manners, we will want reassurance that we did it right. We should not look to the girls for this reassurance, and we should avoid long eye contact with them waiting for their response. "Girls are emotionally based, and you are treading on an area that you don't need to." We must watch over our own heart as well as theirs'. We must look to the Lord and to the other guys for the reassurance that we need, asking them, "did I open the door O.K." "Don't look to the women for reassurance; make sure you're getting it from each other."

Dinner Guest – Minnie

"If your invited somewhere for dinner, don't show up too early, don't show up to late" at a girl's home. They often have last minute preparations. It is much better to be a little late than too early.

House Guest - Mary Lou

When we stay at someone's house, we must work around their schedule. If we know that the family takes showers in the morning then we should take ours later. We must hang up our towels neatly as we found them. When taking a shower, we must put the shower curtain in the inside of the tub, otherwise all the water goes on the bathroom floor. We must be good stewards of other peoples' property if we want to be entrusted with our own. If we take a shower and fog up the mirror, then we should wipe it off with a dry towel or tissues, otherwise "it will leave marks, streak marks, and little blosh marks all over when it dries." We should not ask to borrow their car or for them to do your laundry. We should not ask them what is for dinner or ask them to sew something for us. If they offer to do something for you, then that is fine, "but don't put all your extra burdens on them." We must clean up after ourselves from visiting a home. "What you leave behind makes a lasting impression" on the owners of the home. When company respects your property and cleans up after themselves, then you look forward to having them again. "My question to you is, 'what kind of company are you? Do people look forward to see you again, or are they looking forward to see you leave?'"

House Guest – Vicky

We must not be picky about the food that we are served and stare at it and say, "my mother never made it that way." If we are guests, and they go to bed at ten, then we need to try to go to bed at ten, so that we don't disturb them or their children. We must respect their schedule and the "rules" of their home. If they open their refrigerator to us, we still should ask them specifically if we can use a certain item since they might want to use it for dinner.

House Guest - Mary Lou

"Brother Jim," a single evangelist, stayed for four days at the Gennaro's apartment while they were gone. He secretly left good food in the refrigerator and replaced \$25 worth of burnt bulbs in their bathroom. Mary Lou was so impressed with his thoughtfulness, courtesy, gratefulness, and neatness. As a result she would allow him to stay at her place anytime. "Thoughtfulness leaves an impression."

Dinner Guest - Mary Lou

When you are a dinner guest at a girls' home, we should not get wrapped up in T.V. At the table we should not talk about the game on T.V. or sports or things that are not interesting to the girls there. We must thank the girls for the dinner and compliment them on their home. If you are very spiritual, you can be thought of as unspiritual if you don't have common sense and manners. The reason girls invite us over is for fellowship and to get to know us. Therefore we should not talk about sports and things irrelevant to them. We should "talk about our walk with the Lord, our family, background, issues, and ideas." We must communicate with a purpose. We need to look around the home and compliment their home because it is an expression of them. We are actually complementing their personality. It is better to give one sentence from the heart sincerely than to just be wordy. After dinner, "it is nice to either clear off the table or to offer to clear off the table or to do the dishes. Nine times out of ten they'll say 'don't worry about

it, you're the guest.' That one time they might take you up on it. But even if they do, do it cheerfully because they've spent two to three hours making the meal."

Dinner Guest – Vicky

"If you go to somebody's house and the meal is a total disaster, don't lie and say, 'this is the best meal I ever had.' Because, the person sitting there knows. They're tasting the same thing your tasting... People don't like to be flattered for flattery sake." We must be honest in our gratitude. We should say something nice but not lie by saying something like, "I appreciate all the trouble you went through to make this."

Dignity in Possessions - Mary Lou

Just as a woman expresses herself through the home, our "room tells a story about us," and so does our car and bike. God wants us to bring our beautiful bride to a nice clean room. If we want to be entrusted with a nice home and wife, then we need to clean up our room and keep our possessions with dignity.

Asking Sisters Over for Dinner - Mary Lou

It is acceptable to have dinner with some sisters if we have the right motives. "It's a matter of integrity. You know in your heart what your motives are. If your motives are because you like that person and they make you feel better and they boost up your pride and your ego or if you're madly in love with the way someone looks," then it is wrong to have dinner with them. A proper motive for having dinner with the girls is to establish a friendship with them because we do not know the girls really well. "Your motives are between you and God, and if it gets out of hand then it's between you and me." Vicky interjected that we should be on guard to avoid candlelight dinners and a lot of eye-to-eye contact. "Save all romantic evenings for when you are engaged and married then you will be one happy man for the rest of your life."

Good Work Habits and Priorities - Vicky

Men are to be the bread winners of the home. Bob Weiner recommends that when you are engaged, the guys (with his parents) should have enough money for the honeymoon and the first month's rent. We should not come back from the honeymoon and have no money. We need to plan ahead and build for the future. We need to be thinking of a home, not a dorm room. Jim Blaha would ask the man who comes to marry her daughter, "where is your money." "Most fathers are very protective of their daughters, and they want to see their daughters living at the same standard, if not better than them." "We need to ask God for wisdom on how to save money and how to start building for the future."

Finances - Mary Lou

"The most important thing for a single guy is to have a savings account." Mary Lou's father, like most fathers, was interested first in her and her sister's fiancé's finances and how they could support them. "All my dad was interested in was finances because he knew that lack of

finances could cripple a young marriage." A young Christian couple told Mary Lou that the hardest thing for them as missionaries was that they were on a real tight budget. The man didn't have a very good job, so it was very difficult for them as a newlywed couple, especially since she used to "buy what she wanted to buy and live independently."

Finances – Vicky

"This doesn't mean that if you have a financially tight time that your wife is not going to be submitted to you and all that good stuff; of course she is, she loves you. She's going to go through it with you; But, we're just saying that it will take some of the stress and strain off your marriage. You want to be able to enjoy yourselves and have fun together and you don't want to be worried about 'can we buy a coat?' or 'can we do this?'" It's much easier in marriage if you plan ahead for this financially difficult period.

Finances - Mary Lou

Sometimes we will have to make loans for a house or other things, but we should not purchase things that are out of our realm. In Ephesians 5:25, it says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Jesus also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." This scripture gives husbands a high standard, (personally, I believe I will attain it). "How does Jesus love the church? Jesus gave good gifts to His church. Therefore, scripturally, husbands are to give good gifts to their wives. Franco treats me like a queen. I wish every girl in the world got as treated as well as he treats me. He's always asking me, 'what do you want?', 'what would you like?', 'what would make you happy?', 'what can I buy for you?'... Of course I'm not going to say, 'Oh, I want that and that and that!'... I'm not that type of person. He has that giving nature... He says 'if you want the world, I'll buy you the world.' Because of this, our marriage is so blessed because there is so much giving in it. But, if you're in debt and your finances are totally out of order, you'll never be able to buy your wife nice things that she deserves and that scripturally you really should. There will always be friction in the marriage and there will always be a feeling of 'I wish I had this, I wish I had that, Oh well.' God doesn't want you to live that way. He wants you to live in kingdom excellence, and that's why the smartest thing you could do now is to start working on these areas, so that when it is time for you to be married that you can be blessed and you can have all the finances coming in that you need to really have a real fulfilled time, to really have a good time and enjoy life and not overboard, and enjoy the life's things that God has for us."

Give Happiness to Your Wife – Vicky

Deut. 24:5, says, "When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army, nor be charged with any duty; he shall ~give happiness to his wife~ whom he has taken." This scripture emphasizes that "once he gets married he has to make his wife happy-- to stay home for a year to make her happy... The thing is if he is busy serving her and trying to please her, then she is going to be very happy, and in turn she is going to make him happy. But, if you are always out for yourself and your not looking out for the other's needs and esteeming her higher than yourself, then you are going to be miserable and the marriage will be no fun." We must seek to make her happy and then she will want to make us happy.

Holiness - Mary Lou

"Between now and when you get married is going to determine what your marriage is going to be like in regard to holiness... There is no miracle that happens when you walk down the aisle to change you morally. If you have trouble with lust now, then you will when you are married. If you have trouble with your thought life now, when you get married, as much as you want to love your wife, you're not going to be thinking of your wife, but you're going to be turned over to your thought life... The little things that you get by with now will come out when you are married. Then you will be ashamed and lose respect in your wife's eyes and you're going to have a marriage that struggles for sometime before you can really give that pure love that you want to give without jealousies, insecurities, and fears... In my opinion, the way to build a secure relationship is to go through several years of walking in holiness and proving to God and yourself and the world around you that God is changing you little by little-- that you are a pure man... Franco put his heels down on this area for 5 years. That's a long time. I did it for 8 years. That's a longer time... Franco so trained his mind that he determined that nothing would get into his heart... There was no ounce of flirting in him... The strongest security in our marriage was that I knew that he had walked this thing out for 5 years... I was not worried about an attractive women walking into the room and him glancing over... It has brought tremendous security in my life. I've never been jealous... I don't fight with what 95% of American women struggle with. It's because he proved himself to God, to me, to himself that this area of his life was dealt with. It's always an on going thing. This has brought tremendous security in our marriage that I don't know anything greater than that. Finances and immorality destroys marriages."

Security in Engagement – Vicky

A girl wants security and trust in a fiancé. She will not really want to love someone or give him her whole heart if he is flirting with all the other girls. We just need to be careful how we treat the other girls. "Bob Weiner has shared before, if there is a fiancé guy talking to a bunch of girls, he's giving off some sort of something that he doesn't need to be doing." In marriage, the man will have more responsibilities than the women and is held more accountable to God for what he does.

Fellowship - Mary Lou

To a certain degree, "girls need guys' fellowship, guys need girls' fellowship, and in a good home life, that's what God wanted originally."

Fellowship – Minnie

A lot of times when the guys get together with the girls, its always the most attractive girls, the ones with the best shape, and you know... You don't really pick the ones that are very heavy, that are in our church or the ones that are not very attractive. You know that's going to bring temptation. That's only asking for trouble. That's not saying you can't be around them... Deep down inside, you know why you want them to hang around."

Piling in a Car – Vicky

It's fine to pile in a car together, but remember that girls are turned on by touch, so have the guys sit up front or in the back and the girls sit in the other place.

Talking too Closely - Mary Lou

Guys must not invade in a girl's territory, by standing and speaking so close to them. They will feel very uncomfortable unless they invite you into their space, and they won't until they're married to you.

Girl's Emotions - Mary Lou

As guys, we need to be very careful in the way we talk and behave with the girls, so that we do not rouse their emotions. "Guys are more logical. They're more logically made up-- everything in their head and in their compartment and everything works just like this and they can control their emotions more. Girls are emotionally made up. When you haven't really learned to be spirit led, you wear your emotions on your sleeve. Your emotions are just blaaah, here I am. Girls are very emotional, and all it takes is a little wink or say the wrong thing or something and there like 'Oh wow!' They're winking and blinking and all starry eyed over you, because they're just so led by they're emotions, especially the new believers. Be very careful with the new believers-- VERY, VERY CAREFUL. Do not think that they are walking perfectly in the spirit after six months. No, not at all. Not any more than a guy would be. Pay extra attention to them. [Don't say] 'hey let's go do this and let's do this,' and overdoing it like that. They will take it the wrong way. Your motives may be pure and clean and all everything, but you have to look out for the other person. You have to think for more than just yourself, because God holds you responsible for more than just yourself."

Sensitive to Emotions – Vicky

A comment was made by one of the guys that a possible solution to the previous problem is to totally segregate each gender, the boys from the girls, "since we cannot be totally accountable for what another is thinking." However, you can pick up signals. If you're sensitive in the spirit you'll be able to tell how somebody is looking at you or how somebody is reacting to you, if they're looking to you for reactions. If you see those kind of signals, you need to really be careful and back off and give that person space and pray for them that they'll be standing firm and holy." We need to let the Holy Spirit guide us and tell us how to act in certain situations. My speculation-- Although segregation could be a solution, God desires for us to have healthy, holy relationships with the opposite sex. He has made us that way. To eliminate this fellowship, each gender would be "missing something" that God desires them to have in order to be fulfilled as human beings.

What to Look for in a Wife - Mary Lou

God is very much in favor of marriage and providing a virtuous wife for the men, as shown in the following scriptures: "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband."-- Prov.

12:4. "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."-- Prov. 18:22. Franco and Jim have received more favor from God as a result of being married than before they were married. Prov. 31:10 says, "An excellent wife, who can find her? For her worth is far above jewels." "Why do you think it says, 'Who can find a virtuous women?' Why is she so rare? Why is she so hard to find? Because, the carnal man looks on the outside. And when you look on the outside she's very hard to find. You may never find her." The carnal thinking man wants to "conquer" a woman in order to make himself look good, as well as for other wrong motives. God wants His precious daughters to be a "treasure." We "need to be looking at what is growing on the inside of her," like moral strength and character, self-worth, and especially the ability "to draw upon the Lord and not her own strength." "The wife holds the mood and tone of the home, and if she is anxious, fretful, and confused, then the home will reflect that... She needs to have such a strong relationship with the Lord that she can draw from God in midst of turmoil and troubles during the day. "Otherwise, you're going to be swept into her fickleness and her relationship with God, her ups and her downs, her yo-yo walk-- it's going to pull you down." Vicky interjected, "she will try to draw from your strength what she needs from God, and you'll get frustrated because you cannot give to her what she needs from God-- that's why you need to look for someone whose heart is 100% totally devoted to Jesus." She should also be "pure in thought, pure in act, moral, modest, keep the home well and cook." If not, then they have much work to do before they are ready for marriage. She should be a server, not have self-pity, be diligent, a woman of the Word and prayer. If this is so, then she will be after your best interest and God's best interest, and there will be harmony in the home.

Questions on Engagement – Vicky

The following valid questions were asked: "Doesn't God's perfect choice come in all that?" "Why do we have to worry about all that?" "God has a perfect choice for you, isn't He going to have a perfect time? Isn't that person going to be at a maturity where she will already be doing all that?" This is most probably so! "You can choose how long you want to be engaged to check to see if this person is really really the one you want to marry... How can two walk together unless they agree?" Both should agree in practical areas. Personally, I [Doug] see engagement as a time to get to know each other better in the soul realm before you actually KNOW the other in the physical realm. I do not see it as a trial period. Much wisdom and prayer is devoted BEFORE engagement, seeking God's will. As a result, (based upon hundreds of engagements in Maranatha) statistics support that once a Maranatha couple gets engaged, there is a 99% chance that they will be compatible and be married. Although the inevitable (breaking up) does happen, it should be a last alternative in the back of our minds'. Otherwise, there is sometimes the pressure of being tested, and the subconscious desire to hide your true self, which is evident in some of the worldly dating.

Engagement - Mary Lou

"Wisdom helps you find that person too." The revelation on who to marry does not always just all of a sudden come out of the sky. We need to be growing spiritually and be at the level at least that of what we desire for our wife to be at. As the guy and girl are just "pursuing God and getting things right in their lives," then God will work it out. You don't have to be worried about that. But, you can't just obliviously say, 'Oh, just someday it will happen' without

knowing what's right and what's wrong. And that's why I just want to encourage you to spend time in Proverbs. Proverbs will really get that wisdom and that balance in your life that's needful... **We do not need to shop or look for the right person. When God puts someone on your heart, then "these things will be checks and balances to discern if this is really God's perfect choice or not."**

Non-Maranatha Girl - Vicky

It is not necessarily the case that the one we marry will be in Maranatha. "God is sovereign and knows what you need and who He has for your life. God can do anything."

Engagement - Mary Lou

We should not try to figure everything out. We should leave the details to God and plan for the future now, preparing ourselves.

Preparation for Marriage – Vicky

"Marriage is the blending of two lives." Therefore, much preparation is required. Mary Lou said that if you don't prepare, you will go through marriage with difficulties that you don't have to. Doctors prepare for many years before they become a doctor. "We in America are not preparing for marriage... Marriage is something we need to learn, even after your married, you need to learn how to be married."