



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Biblical Romance: The Design for Intimacy – Part 1

Guest(s): Rev. Tommy Nelson

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, greetings everyone and welcome to Family Talk. I'm your host, Dr. James Dobson. Now, I think I've shared with you before that my lovely wife, Shirley and I have been married for a long time. Can you believe that? Because we're still so very, very young. But our relationship is more solid now than it's ever been before. But you know what? During our dating days we were just learning to love each other and we bumped along like two selfish people, often do.

We dated together for three and a half years before falling head over heels in love and by the time we were married, we'd built a solid foundation. Would you like to know how to do that? Would you like some suggestions on building a firm foundation of love?

Well, I'm not going to provide that for you, but I've brought a message that I think will be helpful to you. The programs we're going to hear today and tomorrow are among the most popular recordings we have ever put on the air, and it was that way when we first aired it many years ago, but it has stood the test of time.

Roger Marsh: Well, it certainly has, doctor. I'm Roger Marsh and on today's edition of Family Talk, we're going to hear from guest speaker the Reverend Tommy Nelson, who is senior pastor of the Denton Bible Church in Denton, Texas. He's been pastor for more than 40 years and Reverend Nelson is certainly a delightful preacher.

Dr. James Dobson: He's also my friend. On this occasion when this message is recorded, Reverend Nelson built his sermon on the Song of Solomon and every marital couple and every dating couple should hear this biblical message and I'm anxious to share it with you. With that, here is Reverend Tommy Nelson as he opens the Word, the Song of Solomon and provides analysis and exposition that I think you will find very helpful. Here is the Song of Solomon.

Rev. Tommy Nelson: Dating is a pain and can be a painful thing. But actually if you want to get kind of specific about it, it's not so much dating as it is the phenomena when dates stack up with the same person and you evolve into that institution that is known as courtship. You see, a bad date costs you a little time, money, and an annoyance, but courtship when you have a bad courtship that costs you a little bit of your soul.

It's kind of like if you were to see somebody on a sub-zero day taking their tongue and putting it to a flagpole. And you would say, "Friend that is an ill-designed and an uncommon union, and you're not going to get out of that without leaving a little part of you on that flagpole." Well, that's what courtship is. When you start dating the same person over and over and over, you may not do it like the quiet man with John Wayne coming and having your formal proposal. But when you date the same person, you're into courtship. Be it in Dallas or in Victorian England, you're into courtship.

Now, dating takes a little bit of time and a little bit of politeness. Courtship is a different animal altogether and it takes all kind of sensitivity. You can't go too shallow or you're frustrated. You can't go too deep, too fast, or too far or you destroy it. Courtship takes great flexibility, it takes tenderness, sensitivity. It takes holiness. Courtship really is just what the Word says. To treat somebody in a courtly manner is to treat them like they were a prince or a princess, to bring them to your way of thinking and to trust you.

When you date a young lady and you court her, you treat her in a certain way that she'll want to spend the rest of her life with you. You treat a young man in your words, your responses, your actions so that he's convinced about you and he wants to spend the rest of his life with you. Courtship takes you intentionally to marriage. Dating is observation. Courtship is depth. Dating is marketing. Courtship is the close, if you know what I'm saying.

Now, to have a good courtship, four things have to occur in dating. The number one thing you have to do in dating is you have to have the wisdom to properly evaluate the character of the person that you are now going to court. In other words, what you see is what you get. In other words, you are courting what they are, not what they are not, and you have to be willing to live in courtship with the character, the standard of righteousness and also the personality.

If you're going to court somebody, you're saying that, "I've evaluated them in dating, and if it's a quiet person in dating, you can't court and then marry and make them noisy." If it is a fellow who has the sensitivity of a stomach pump in dating, you can't try to court with this fellow and marry him and thank you're going to change him. Women have been trying it forever and it will not work. It is the job of the Holy Ghost to transform not yours. And so you have to have the wisdom like this couple did to properly evaluate that person that you have dated that you intend to go to courtship.

All right? The standard of moral righteousness and the personality. You've got to be willing to live with them. Secondly, you've got to have consistency in dating. I see all of these couples that fight in dating and fall in and out of dating and break up and get back together. So they say, "Look, it ain't going to work too well. Let's get married. We are not bench pressing 70 pounds. Let's stack 350 on the bar. We can't get along in four hours a day. Let's commit till we're 90 and never leave the house."

Not wise. Folks, your dating relationship should be easy. You should be able to negotiate it. You should have the same standard of moral uprightness and you should be able to live with the kind of person God has made and has given you. So I've never seen a good courtship from a dating that breaks up, breaks out and then gets back together. You just can't do it. Thirdly, this is a biggie.

In dating, you have to have the sensitivity of communication. This is where most specifically girls get hurt. Now here's what I mean. Anybody read Dave Barry this week in the Dallas Morning News? Great article. He said, "Women are reaching for a relationship." He said, "Men shy from responsibility." He said, "If a man was a chicken breast and you put him in the microwave in July, he wouldn't be ready at Thanksgiving." Men shy away from that kind of commitment.

Fellas, when you've taken her out five, six times, then you've got to sit down with her and say, "I want you to know. I don't know if you're the girl that God has for my life or whether you would want to be, but I know this, you're certainly the type of woman that I would want to spend my life with and I so enjoy spending this time with you. And I would like to ask you if I could keep taking you out as to whether I can fall completely in love with you and you can be my wife and I want you to know that if you would like to back out of this, you owe me nothing but honesty. You have been nothing but upright with me."

And then here's the key, this'll get her right here, right? Then you say this, you say, "And if I'm not the fellow, not only do you need to leave me, but I'll pray and find the guy that you should marry." That'll work. You see what I'm saying? And in the same way, fellas, if you're taking this girl and she's a wonderful friend, but it doesn't want to go any deeper than you need to say, and girls, you need to give him the freedom to say, and incidentally guys, always give a girl an out.

At this point, I would hate to be a woman. Women don't like messing on guys all the time and just putting them down. I said to my wife, "I would hate to be a woman and always have some knucklehead like us kind of say..." And what do you say to them? "Nah, get out. Why don't you die? Or something like that." How does a woman graciously drop a guy off? That's a hard thing to do. Always give a girl the option to say, you tell me no and I'll go away. And in the same way fellas, if you're taking a girl out and she's a wonderful girl, but you don't see it going anyplace, you need to say, "You're a wonderful person. I so enjoy just spending time with you as a friend. I don't see my heart going anyplace."

And girls that may not make you happy or excited, but nevertheless, he's been honest with you. And I see more couples get hurt from bad communication and the lack of it. Somebody has got to talk. And listen, I had this done to me and I know it can be done. Maple Street Dorm, 1972, girl sat with me and said, she was a Christian girl, "I so enjoy spending this time with you. However, I would feel..." She was sharp. She said, "I would feel such a peace if God were to take us now in different ways."

And it didn't take Forrest Gump too long right here to figure this out. God gives peace when I'm not around. All right, I see what you're saying. But she was able to do it, so you got to talk. Are you with me? This is good stuff now. And this couple did this in their dating. The couple had wisdom of evaluation. They had sensitivity and communication and there they got along. They had consistency. And the other big one is you have got to have patience and letting the relationship go on.

Don't escalate a relationship too quick. How do you escalate a relationship too quick? One way is couples share too much, too deep, too fast. You go to Denny's and you spend from seven to two on the first date and the guy just goes, "Bleh," and just lets everything out in his entire life. And sometimes you can bind too quick on that. Another way is, how can you say this? Keep your hands off each other. You know what I'm saying? Sometimes you get your hands too fast on somebody. It's like those kids at the mall and energy's coming off of them like bug zappers where they're walking around with each other on the mall. And you know they're playing with fire.

And especially guys, you don't go kissing on some woman before you're willing to be responsible to hold her heart. And so be careful of taking it too deep. And fellas, good word. Whenever a girl says thanks, but no thanks, or whenever a girl shows any inclination, here's a great verse for you, "Do you see honey? Eat what you need lest you eat too much and vomit it up." Next verse, "Let your foot not be often in your neighbor's house lest he come to despise you."

Those two verses are put right next to each other to show that a good thing is good, but too much of a good thing when you become a bore can make people hate you. Now, once those are established, let's take a look at chapter two. In verse eight, we're in a new day and this couple that has dated with wisdom and success, and consistency, and sensitivity, and piety, and restraint.

Now, let's see what a man should feel in a good courtship. Verse 8, "Listen, my beloved. Behold he is coming. Climbing on the mountains, leaping on the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag." And in verse seven, she is called a young doe, a gazelle. "Behold, he is standing behind our wall. He's looking through the windows. He is peering through the lattice." This man is pictured as a stag and he draws, he runs and he leaps on the mountains to get closer to this woman. He is excited.

This is what a man should feel and a woman also in a relationship that is going into courtship. Time should not dwindle. Time kindles this relationship. That's why one of the greatest tests of a relationship is the separation test when you're away from each other. Is it out of sight, out of mind? Or do you feel like a young stag wanting to get closer and closer to her?

Look at something else, verse 10. What period girls can answer this so well? What period of the year are we in here, ladies? Verse 10. My beloved

responded and said to me, "Arise my darling, my beautiful one and come along for winter is passed. The rain is over and gone. The flowers have already appeared in the land. The time has arrived for pruning the vines. The voice of the turtle dove has been heard in our land. The fig tree has ripened. The vines and blossom have given forth fragrance. Arise, my darling, my beautiful one and come along."

Ladies, what period are we in? Yes, isn't it? It's time for growth. It's springtime and summer that we've moved into. That's the second thing that a relationship should produce is life. How many times have you seen singles begin to date that are spiritual, godly people? And once they get to date, their spiritual relationship goes down and there is not life produced. There's guilt and anger. They disappear from church. They disappear from Bible study.

The guy is worried about her. He doesn't read his Bible. That's why not just the separation test, but the time test. Time should produce life. When I was with my wife fellas, I wanted to read my Bible more to keep up the pace, to be able to merit this woman. I met her in a prayer group at Campus Crusade for Christ when she was heading the prayer group for an illusionist named Andre Cole that was coming and I was the emcee, and I met this woman. I wanted to walk close with God just to be with her.

And if I hadn't have shown up in church, if I had have dropped out, if I had acted immorally to her, I'm convinced Teresa would've dropped me like a hot rock as she should have. What are two things you should feel? You should feel desire, and you should feel life by being around this person.

Verse 14. Now what's something that you do? Watch this, "Oh my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret path or place of the steep pathway, let me hear your voice, your voice is sweet and your form is lovely." Fellas, what kind of position is this girl in? She is an innocent dove up in the clefts of a rock in the steep pathway back there. Solomon thought that he knew her in dating, but he didn't. And now she's coming out. And guys to a dove in the clefts of the rock, there's nothing more frightening than a man's hands.

And this girl is back there and she's slowly and surely coming out. And this is the way it's going to be in courtship. Fellas, how does Jesus Christ love your girl to be? Ephesians 5, "He has washed her by the washing of water with the word to present to himself the church and all her glory, having no spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. There is no spot so nasty that he cannot get it out."

See also Paul the murderer, David the adulterer, Mary Magdalene the prostitute, Zacchaeus the tax collector. He can forgive anything and there is no wrinkle. That's something that's hidden. There are some things in your life that only you and God, an offended person and your mate to be will know. And if you forgive like God forgives, there's no wrinkle. There's no hidden thing that you can't forgive. You talk and you cry. And fellas, if you've got a girl that in

some of these girls have been hurt so deeply. And when a man puts his hands out, they're going to instinctively go back in the steep place.

When she tells you of how she has been hurt, of what she's been through, many of them of immorality they have been through. Let me tell you, you're going to want to take that girl and hold her so close to you. You're going to love her so deeply that your thought is going to be, "Sweetie, you are never going to be hurt again. You're with a man that's going to treat you with such kindness and such dignity and such love, and with such gentleness."

And in the same way girls, you're going to look at him and say, "You're going to find all of your needs satisfied in me. You will never, ever get defiled again." So you talk. You know what the next way you're going to find out about your mate? Is the inevitability of time. You're going to stumble onto things. I remember. I'm not a really good pathfinder. I get lost easily. My wife is Daniel Boone. She never gets lost. I kid you not. On one occasion, we were driving around and I said... I was in a place and I said, "Where are we?" And Teresa went, "There's our backyard right there."

Honest. She can find her way anywhere. I can't find my place, no place. When we were dating early on, I and my dear sweet wife-to-be, my dear precious dove, she and I would go to speak in the metroplex area and whenever I would get kind of lost, I would do the obvious thing you would do to find your way around. I would look for a water tower with the high school mascot on it. And I knew if it was a fighting farmer or if it was a Grand Prairie, whatever, where I was, okay? Smart guy.

One time I got mixed up and I went, I said, "I don't know where we are." I went in and I said to this 7-Eleven guy, I said, "Where am I? Is this Louisville?" He said, "No, you're in Irving." I went out and I said, "Teresa, we're in Irving. We're going to be late." I thought that was so funny. And she looks at me with these eyes and she ain't laughing. And I found out some things about my wife and I found out little things that still today I discover about her.

My wife is of the gene of species, what is called pakus-ratum. She saves everything. We have boxes of hair from the shower. I ain't kidding you. Not really. But that's the way she is. Me, I love to clean house. I take a trash can bag and I clean like Sherman did Atlanta. All right? Everything is gone. I've thrown away paychecks, I've thrown away bills, everything. She don't think that's funny. Can you imagine? And she and I sometimes do this, you're going to inevitably learn things.

Dr. James Dobson:

I hope you enjoyed part one of Tommy Nelson's sermon through Song of Solomon here on Family Talk. We care about you and we'd love to help you through the ups and downs of marital life. If there's anything we can do for you, I wish you would contact us, let us know. Let us know how we can pray for you. If today's message has encouraged you, I would love to hear about it.

Roger Marsh:

Well that's right Dr., we do love to hear from our listeners. And friend, if you'd like to reach out you can do so very easily on our website at drjamesdobbson.org/familytalk. Or by calling us at 877-732-6825. A member of our constituent care team will be happy to take your call and whatever you need, whether it's a prayer request or a recommendation for a resource, we will be happy to fulfill that information for you. Again that number is 877-732-6825. Now keep in mind as we're talking about marriage, our own Dr. James Dobson and his wife, Shirley, recently celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary. Lasting love indeed. If you are seeking to build a love that will stand the test of time, why not consider getting a copy of Dr. Dobson's book called, *Head Over Heels*. It's a practical guide on how to use your head in matters of the heart. Get it? And build a relationship that will last in the process. Now, we'll be happy to send you a copy of Dr. Dobson's book, *Head Over Heels*, as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk today. So go online, just go over to drjamesdobbson.org/familytalk and click the link at the bottom of today's broadcast page. That's drjamesdobbson.org/familytalk.

It was former President John F. Kennedy who once said, "The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all." You know, this year in particular, it is crucial for us as believers, who are Americans to be informed voters. Uninformed voters on the other hand will ultimately make decisions that may be detrimental to the future of the community and our country on the whole.

Our democratic system as a constitutional republic works best when voters as a whole are knowledgeable and active participants. That's why here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we want to support you with a biblically based voter guide.

You can sign up to receive your free voter guide by the way when you go to drjamesdobbson.org/2024voterguide. Also online, you want to check out the "Countdown to Decision 2024" Podcast. You'll see some very familiar faces like Kirk Cameron, Eric Metaxas, Riley Gaines, and more. You can listen to their interviews about important election issues when you go to drjamesdobbson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. And be sure to get your Faith Votes stickers while supplies last when you're at the Countdown to Decision 2024 website as well. And we'll be happy to send you a packet of 25 of these Faith Votes stickers as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk today. So go online to drjamesdobbson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024.

Well, be sure to join us again tomorrow for the second half of Rev. Tommy Nelson's breakdown of the book of Song of Solomon. That's coming up right here next time on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Till then, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.