

## 1993 WOMEN'S RETREAT

### Teachings:

1. *Being Single and Liking It*—Laura
2. *The Spiritual Woman*—Martha

### Handouts:

3 Levels of Relationships

3 Kinds of Love

Marriage and Dating

"Bliss on Both Sides"

"Removing the Mystique"

"Filling the Gap"

"Single by Design"

### Further Reading:

*Improving Your Serve*, Chuck Swindoll.

*Quality Friendship*, Gary Inrig.

*Open Heart Open Home*, Karen Maines.

*Talking Together*.

*Sex, Love or Infatuation*.

*\*Marriage Choices and Spiritual Growth*, Dennis McCallum, Gary Delashmutt.

*\*The Secret of Loving*, Josh McDowell.

**Handouts:**

**'93 WOMEN'S RETREAT**

**(GOVERNOR'S LODGE)**

A Single Person's Identity

3 Levels of Relationships

3 Kinds of Love

Marriage and Dating

"Bliss on Both Sides"

"Removing the Mystique"

"Filling the Gap"

"Single by Design"

**Being Single and Liking It**

**Read quotes. PG. 24 and 25 "Bliss" article.**

Why do I get the feeling, most of you aren't buying this philosophy?

**Could it be we've been brainwashed** into a different way of thinking by our society?

**Soaps:**

*"One Life to Live"—*

• Luna and Max—SINGLES. Wait for sex. Not until marriage but until Valentine's Day for the stars to align for the greatest passion.

• Tina—MARRIED/CHILD. The dilemma of a lifetime: Do I pick Cain for great sex? Or stay married to my husband who I love?

• Vickie and Sloan. So I've been married for twenty years? General Sloan Carpenter is so romantic. I should follow my feelings.

**And that's just ONE soap opera!!**

**Our culture promotes self-gratification. When was the last time you heard it encouraging serving others, putting someone else's needs before yours or building long-term relationships?**

- **Sandy.**

- **My oldest son's school taught him at age 12 that sex can be right at any age. It's only wrong if you're FORCED to do it. It's right as soon as you CHOOSE to have sex.**

**Society also teaches us to worship "self" through the physical body. "Look beautiful. Eat right. Don't do drugs. Take care of your body."**

The **Bible also says (1Cor. 6:19-20) "body is temple of H.S; glorify Him in our body."** But, the Bible says to take care of our bodies as a way of worshipping God, NOT ourselves.

**Ironically, our culture actually promotes things that degrade and abuse our bodies. Particularly, in the role of sexuality.**

**What are we taught in the world about sex?**

- use your body for pleasure; live for the moment
- don't consider the effect on you or the other person
- no harm can come from sexual involvement
- you're missing out if you don't have sex while you're single.

In reality, **sex outside marriage is the zenith of selfish exploitation;** the height of selfishness. You're only concerned with what you can get for yourself. But you always get hurt, and the experience is only temporarily satisfying.

That's why the **Bible also says to FLEE Sexual Immorality. (1Cor. 6:18). It's not that God doesn't want us to experience**

pleasure. Rather, He created us to have sexual fulfillment within a committed marriage relationship. He knows anything LESS won't be satisfying.

**You don't believe me? Answer these questions (to yourself):**

- How have I benefitted from having sex?
- Will this improve my relationship with my future husband?
- Am I proud of my sexual history or do I feel guilty?
- Am I more fulfilled for my experience?
- Have my self-image, identity and security improved?

**I don't ask** these questions to embarrass you or make you feel guilty. I'm making a **point: Sex is designed by God.**

**He's not trying to rip us off.** Our sexuality is one of the **greatest gifts** from God. Each of us has a **built-in "sense"** that the deep committed love relationship in marriage is how we should express our sexuality. That's why you may feel guilty, dirty, compromised, used or ashamed if you have sex while you're single.

**God has a higher view** of us than as animals only satisfied through physical lust. We are created in God's image. We are His highest creation with tremendous potential mentally, spiritually and physically.

**He created** man and woman so that as they express their sexuality, they become "one flesh." God designed marriage as the only place for sex. This is the environment in which sexuality was created by God to flourish and be shared and enjoyed by a woman and her husband, and no one else.

Sex is the **most intimate act** of giving. There is an emotional and spiritual aspect of sexuality that is the deepest form of communication—the real expression of love that God values and has created only to be experienced in marriage.

Marriage is the **place where the family** takes shape and grows. **Any other environment** for sex is like an uprooted plant. Even though it may look pretty in the vase for a short while, it is uprooted. Soon, it will wilt, blacken and die.

But **we have an enemy** (Could it be Satan?). He hates marriage with its God-created and ordained sexuality. He has deceived our culture into the mindset that sex is what will make you happy—the more partners the more pleasure. These are lies!

Satan is **full of rage**. (1 Pt. 5:6,7). He knows that his time is short, has in these last days launched an unprecedented, all-out attack against marriage and the family. It's his master plan for **destruction**.

**Why?** Because the framework of the family gives us our values and sense of what love is. But God says, "in the last days, peoples' love will grow cold." In order for this to happen, the family unit has to be undercut and eroded away. Then their "love will grow cold" and be capable of things that were unheard of before. They will go astray from once firmly rooted Biblical moorings.

The people in our culture today are demonstrating **character disorders** that clearly go back to a lack of parental love and their own families being destroyed by Satan's tactics. We have to understand just how Satan is attacking so we can stand against his strategy and **protect our future marriages and families. How?**

### **For you young, single women—**

You have **strong romantic and sexual desires**. These desires can become acute/obsessive, and actually destroy your relationship with God and your concentration on His will for your life. **Here you are:** single, a Christian, and full of desires. That can be difficult to say the least.

**How should you react?** How should you respond to legitimate sexual feelings in a Christian way?

**1. Don't be super-spiritual,** hide or deny your feelings. This isn't healthy or Biblical. Instead:

- **admit** to God and your close friends that you have these desires.

- **prepare** for marriage where you can express your sexuality in a giving and committed way. Set a goal to learn how to love Biblically with agape love. Build toward this goal in a spiritual, careful patient way—in God's timing.

- **learn and believe *Ps 37:4***.—"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

**2. Don't give in to your passions.** Just too much to stand against.

I want to tell a story about a man named Esau. ***Gen 25:29-34***.

God also comments ***Heb.12:16-17*** . (Explain birthright.)

It's true that **Esau changed his mind**, went back to his father, Isaac and asked for his birthright. But Isaac had already given

his birthright with all its privileges to his brother Jacob. Even though Esau wept and pleaded with Isaac, it was too late.

**Does this seem unfair or cruel?** That in a moment of extreme hunger Esau made a rash decision that he was sorry about later? Why should this be something he had to live with for the rest of his life? "Give the guy a break, God.! Haven't we all done things in a moment of desire or passion, we were sorry about later?"

The Bible teaches that **our decisions are significant.**

**Did you ever think about** how much God respects us/our choices and actually defers to our will. We aren't puppets. WE DON'T HAVE TO OBEY GOD. He gives us FREE WILL. It's a tremendous privilege and responsibility. He wants us to make our own decisions based on his leading—Bible, prayer, advice from other Christians.

But, **if we choose to defy God's will** and do what we know is wrong, then we should understand that we have to live with the **consequences** of our actions.

**What we are saying** is, "I want to make my own choices, but God's responsible for the outcome." That's separating free will from responsibility. We're being like Esau.

**Don't assume** God will automatically come in and repair the damage we cause. Very often God DOES straighten out our lives, but there are always consequences. Some areas of decisionmaking, like sexuality, are more serious than others and have serious results.

***Just remember: there is no such hunger/sexual passion so severe that justifies trading God's will to satisfy it.***

If you think you **HAVE** to have sex, that you can't resist your desire—that's a lie! You can. **Choose** to stand against your passions. I realize that this is a radical idea in a culture that promotes immediate gratification. It isn't easy, but it can be done:

- depends on trusting God. **Mt. 7:7-11.**
- focus of your thoughtlife. **Rom 8:5-10.**

**You can choose** to build God's framework around your sexuality. You can develop patience, strength of character and unselfishness. No matter what your sexual history is, you can learn to say no from now on and prepare yourself for intimacy with only one man—your husband.

**4. Don't be obsessed with getting a man.** It feels good to have a man pay attention to and compliment, take you places. But if ~~it~~ you get in the trap of needing a man's affirmation to feel good about yourself, soon you'll be ungrateful and quit believing God cares about the "desires of your heart".

**You'll get angry** at God, and decide to take matters into your own hands. After all, who knows what type of man is right for you than you?! Leave the big problems to God. You handle your lovelife.

**God will no longer satisfy** you because your attention isn't focused on Him; it's on yourself and getting a man. This self-centered focus only leads to more frustration and defeat. It becomes a treadmill that's very difficult to get off. You feel miserable, depressed and self-centered. You're unable to function or love God.

**Ironically**, after living this frustrated way for awhile, this

woman probably will find someone. She'll never go to God about the relationship, of course.

Chances are, that in trying to get away from God, she'll get **involved with an unbeliever**. This is definitely outside God's will and leads to a lifetime of unhappiness. Paul forbids this in *1 Cor. 7*. A lot of Xtians date nonXtians without thinking about marriage. (SUE.)

**The manhunt** becomes a self-gratifying search. It's what the Bible calls idolatry. You worship each other and become more important to each other than God is to you. And, this person always disappoints your expectations.

**Your love interest replaces God at center of your life.** And sadly, because you're really using each other to feel better, you'll both be defrauded and exploited.

*"Women play at sex to get romance; men play at romance to get sex."*

The truth is stated in *quote on pg 29, "Filling the Gap."*

I want to take a few minutes to consider one of the biggest **ROADBLOCKS** to taking our fulfillment from God.

### **INFATUATION:**

This is a state **beyond reason and self-control**. It's expressed in these words: "I didn't consider anymore whether what we were doing was right or wrong. It didn't matter." Tanya Tucker expresses this feeling in her new country song, "It's a little too late to turn back now." Or my personal favorite sung by Rob Lee last week, "Feelings, Whoa, whoa, whoa, feelings."

This is **romantic passion—EROS**. It has a disorganizing and destructive effect on you. You aren't yourself, grades and work may suffer, and other relationships begin eroding. You only see the positives in a man. He can do no wrong. (*Handout--3 Kinds of Love.*)

**Infatuation isn't love.** Love is building and constructive. You are outward focused, free to be yourself. You're not consumed by the person, but outgoing and confident in all other relationships. Love doesn't turn you inward, isolate you, or stir up jealousy when another woman is near your man. You have a trust with that person. Love promotes growth in all areas of life—ministry, the Word, prayer, more relationships, more loving concern for others.

### **SIGNS OF INFATUATION:**

#### **1. Main interest is person's physique.** Based on 5 senses.

When you think of the "perfect" man for you, what are the first **3 qualities** that come to mind? NOW, think of 3 godly qualities!

**Love focuses on the whole person**, especially his relationship with Christ. His personality, way of relating, leadership. How he looks will change. Soon! But his character will remain.

**How he really is on the inside**, is what's important. Is he a godly, mature man? These qualities are what matters and increase. Isn't that what you want a man to care about most in you? To love you for who you are, not for how you look? To love your godliness?

**Ex:Tiffany.**

**Quote pg 32, "Removing the Mystique."**

#### **2. Sexual interest.**

**A marriage based on sex** will last 3-5 years tops. For you math wizes: Facts collected by coueslors and psychologists report:

avg. married couple has sex 2-3 times a week.

avg. of 8 min. each time.

= 24 minutes of sex a week.

168 hours in a week, so less than 1/2 hour of that is spent having sex. My question is: What are you going to do with the rest of those 167 1/2 hours each week?

Sex is certainly **part of a healthy marriage**. But it's not the total relationship; it's only one of many elements.

**BENEFITS OF BEING A SINGLE XTN WOMAN: (PHIL 4:11-13)**

***Read bottom pg 1, top of 2—"A Single Person's Identity."***

**1. Specific plan that God has for you NOW as a single.** You have avenues of growth and service that aren't open to married people. You'll never have more free time, freedom and opportunities.

You can **live with other single women** or in a ministry house, go out any evening you choose, disciple young Xtn women by living with them. This isn't wasted time; it's building, maturing time. You're building character, skills, relational ability for your future family. All these areas are important/vital in a married relationship.

**Use these opportunities** to grow spiritually, to reach others, to build into them, to mature and learn about yourself as you relate to others. Especially learn to know and love God. Take advantage of your singleness to serve, to grow in your giving-ness

and being committed. Ask God to develop these qualities to better serve your future husband AND family with.

**Do you REALLY believe you are ready** to get married? Why are you in such a HURRY?

• **Is it that you can't wait** to begin a lifetime of giving, self-sacrifice and putting another person's needs first, always? That's what Christian marriage is.

• **Or is it that you can't wait** to teach him how to meet all your needs, and put you first in his life? That your man will take away your loneliness and make everything perfect? Someone will finally love YOU the way you deserve?

***\*Read quote pg. 33, "Removing the Mystique."***

**Unless you let God work** on your sin areas now, Whatever relating problems you have now, you'll carry with you into marriage. Whatever anger, jealousies, hate, bitterness....

*"Women expect to change their husbands and they won't; men expect their wives to stay the same and they don't."*

**Point is:** Let God change your character now. Be yourself now as a single; with friends and men. Then you'll know they are responding to the true you.

**You'll be married 40 or 50 years.** You can never experience the freedom and excitement of being single again. Ever. Isn't it worth it to prepare for marriage for these next few years? And ENJOY this time?

**Krista and I** were discussing this, and she didn't believe I could have been happy, single. There were times I wasn't. I wanted to get married. I was sure there was **NO ONE** for me, at least who I'd met yet. Time was awasting.

But **during that time** as a single (I didn't marry until I was 29) I learned to trust God more, how to take my identity from God and not a man, how to build lasting relationships in the body of Christ. I came to a point where I **LOVED** being single, and part of me actually didn't want to give that up and get married. (OK, only a small part.)

**\*Being a young, single woman should be one of the most exciting times of your life. Is this true for you? If not, ask yourself, WHY NOT?**

### **Are there still inappropriate areas in your life?**

- **Are you focused on finding the right guy?** Instead, concentrate on letting God change areas in your own life to prepare you for a serious relationship and marriage. Ask him to work on the areas that could hurt your marriage.

- **Do you have a sexual past?** God wants to heal that. But it takes time. You marry one man, forever, so God needs to free you from the ghosts of the past intimacy with other men.

- **Do you have a pattern** of unsuccessful relationships? This will mean future failure in marriage. Whatever reason this is the case—immaturity; selfishness; lack of vulnerability, commitment or stability—you first need to learn to build successful relationships.

**Did God pick area of sexuality to deal w/self-life?**

We often think "I know what I need better than God does. God disagrees.

**You can fight God** on this point or trust Him, saying, "You know what's best for me, God. I know you love me and will give me what's best for me at every point of my life, so I'll trust you with my singleness."

**FOR ALL OF US, the conflict between the flesh and spirit has to be resolved. (Gal. 5:17.)** So God, being all-knowing, chooses the area He knows we need to learn to submit to His spirit. Is it in the area of sexuality He is asking you, "Which is more important? Your desires in this area or My Will?"

**You are free to refuse God's will**, but that's a tragic mistake. If you let God, He will give you victory and bring you to maturity. Don't have the attitude that you are a special case and God can't work with you. God can!

**God can bring anyone to maturity**—to a full, abundant life. Anyone who is willing, God can change, heal, mature and He will give you the desires of your heart.

**This is what God wants you to pursue love—not marriage.** Marriage isn't an end in itself; it's a means to an end. The end is love. Marriage is the servant of love.

**Pursue love now in your relationships.** You'll gain deep friendship and companionship; 2 elements of a healthy marriage.

**Paul defines pursuing love in 1 Cor 13:4-7.** This is really AGAPE love. It's impossible to have apart from a relationship with J.C. It's the very life of God lived out through you to others.

**Pursuing love:**

1. alleviates the nagging question, "Is this THE one?"
2. teaches you how to build up/encourage another person.
3. teaches you how to make and keep friends.
4. frees from pressures and hassles of trying to find a mate.

**2 PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT PURSUING LOVE:**

**1. Acceptance.** Instead of coming to a person with preconceived ideas of what I want to make this person into, come accepting her because she is loved by the Lord. God created her and Xt died for her. I can see her thru Xt's eyes. (Rom 5:8.)

In pursuing love, acceptance is what helps us **take our masks** off and reveal ourselves to another person. If you learn to do this first with women where there are no sexual trapping, it will become easier to be the real you with a man. Practice the freedom of openness now, before you get married.

**2. Commitment.** This means taking on the **responsibility** to get to know another sister or brother. Relationships are risky. Sometimes you get hurt. But the love you experience is worth the risk.

There's **no back door** in Xtn relationships. It's about initiating love toward people we wouldn't normally be friends with. There's no backing out when people see your sins; or rejecting them as you feel the effects of theirs. No keeping people at a safe distance. Lonely.

**Example.** I know from experience. Skill of self-protection.  
Irony = seal off pain/seal off the love I want most.

**Once you start** building a relationship in the Body of Xt, pursue it with love, patience, prayer and persistence. Don't run when it's your turn to be vulnerable. Let yourself experience Xtn love.. If you can't do this as a single w/friends—won't be able to in marriage.

**God designed women with a deep desire to be cherished,** loved and accepted. Don't you wish you could experience this, even when someone knows the absolute worst about you? To not feel judged when you screw up? To feel someone love you despite sins?

**God knows this.** That's why He desires **unity and oneness**—among believers in the Body of Christ, and within a marriage.

He doesn't walk away when we are difficult to get along with. He gives us grace, even though He may address a problem area. He always has our best interest at heart. He wants us to pursue that kind of love with others—as single or married women.

**Pursue love in spite of** your fears, rebellious nature or autonomy. Stand against keeping people at arm's length, manipulating or controlling them.

**If you tell God this is your hope,** He'll bring women and men into your life to build friendships with. Maybe He has already done this. If that's the case, the question is, “are you willing to risk sharing yourself with someone on more than on a superficial level?”

Let me show you the easiest way to learn how to do this.

**Handout: 3 LEVELS OF RELATIONSHIPS.**

**Further Reading:**

*Improving Your Serve*, Chuck Swindoll.

*Quality Friendship*, Gary Inrig.

*Open Heart Open Home*,

*Talking Together*,

*\*Marriage Choices and Spiritual Growth*, Dennis McCallum, Gary  
Delashmutt.

*\*The Secret of Loving*, Josh McDowall.