



SWEET TO MY TASTE

Part 2 of The Peasant Princess

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Song of Songs 1:8 - 2:7 | September 28, 2008

You're listening to the Peasant Princess Sermon Series, where Pastor Mark Driscoll takes us through the poetic book Song of Songs. For more audio and video content, please visit marshillchurch.org.

Couple quick announcements before we get to work. Couple resources may be of some help. A Celebration of Sex by Douglas Rosenau; if you buy one book on this series, buy Rosenau's book. It is the Christian marital pyrotechnics manual. It is very good, and it deals with all of the big questions and issues, and if you are married, you will want to read it and discuss it with your spouse, not girlfriend or boyfriend. Additionally, Intimacy Ignited by the Dillows is a great book. It's a commentary on the Song of Songs that we are studying. It's also got a Bible study for married couples, and it's very practical and very helpful. So if you're a married couple this, as well, would be exceedingly helpful, and, shameless plug, the last one, my new book, Death By Love just came out, and it's the latest work.

Actually it's a series of letters I wrote to people in this church on the cross of Jesus, and there are people in here that are dealing with sexual sin, sexual abuse, sexual addiction, so thematically it actually does dovetail with our series. That's on sale everywhere. I will go ahead and pray. My name's Mark. We're in Song of Songs, Chapter 1, Verse 8. This week we hit one of the more tricky parts of the book, and so I'll go ahead and pray, and if you've got a Bible go to Song of Songs, Chapter 1, Verse 8. And we'll see how this goes. Father God, we thank you that you're a God of love, that you've created us male and female for marriage, and relationship and intimacy, pleasure and joy. Thank you for the Scriptures. Thank you that all Scripture is God-breathed. Thank you that the Song of Songs is inspired by you to help us.

And, God, though the book is 3,000 years old, the issues contained in it are absolutely current. I ask for wisdom by your Holy Spirit to teach people well, and ask for that grace in Jesus' good name. Amen. Do a little bit of an introduction on just a few points regarding marriage before we launch into the book. I've been with my lovely wife, Grace, now for over 20 years. 16 of those married. Before that, we were dating in high school and got married in college. You'll meet her a little bit later. You're welcome to send in your text message questions, and she and I will answer as many of them at the close as we can. Couple things I will say that we've learned. One is that marriage is for happiness and holiness, but holiness before happiness.

If you go into marriage saying, "This will make me happy," just so you know, two sinners don't live happily ever after. Two sinners have conflict and friction and difficulty, and if you go into marriage thinking this exists — the marriage does — to make me happy, at certain points, you'll say, "Well, I must have married the wrong person, because I'm not happy." We never tend to think, "Well, maybe I'm not the right person." It's always them, but, nonetheless, if marriage is to make us holy, then even when the difficulty rough patches come, we don't lose heart and give up, because we know that the ultimate purpose for the marriage is still in effect and God is using the hardship of the marriage to sanctify us and make us more like Jesus. Some people say, "Well, I don't want to get married, because I want to do ministry."

I will you that marriage is, in and of itself, a ministry, and you could be single to serve Jesus, or even get married and be like him. You will grow in your holiness through marriage. Second thing I will tell you is this. That marriage is about getting old, and growing old together. The goal needs to be: we're going to be old and wrinkled and together and happy, and the happiness that is experienced by couples, statistically, at age — at year 35 of the marriage is the highest. So, statistically, sociologically, the longer you're married, the better it gets. The more the love and the intimacy and the joy comes into existence, and it takes, statistically, the sociologists say, 9 to 14 years in a marriage before you're even able to think of your spouse in a non — an unselfish way. It takes at least nine years for the average couple to go from "me" to "we".

The first 9 to 14 years it's about me. What I want; what I like; what I need; how you need to change so that I can get what I want. At some point, you start thinking like a Christian, usually after about a decade. How can I love you? How can I serve you? How can I encourage you? How can I care for you? And as both have that attitude, it becomes a wonderful marriage. Now the problem is most people divorce before year nine. They're like, "Well, this isn't working." And then they start over and repeat the worst years. The goal is to hang in there, and some seasons of marriage, you just got to live through them. Have kids. That's a big adjustment, right? One of you gets sick, that's a big issue. Sometimes it's not easy. You just get through it. Sometimes it's just a bad stretch of road, and you've just got to persevere and get through it.

Now, that being said, the way you get through it and persevere is by having this attitude: "I am a servant." This is the Christian view of marriage. I'm not a God to be worshipped. I am a servant who serves. I am a servant who serves, and as a married couple is able to take on that posture of humility and service, they grow in their ability to care for one another, and the intimacy and the pleasure, it just magnifies itself and it multiplies itself in the marriage. And there's a guy named Gary Chapman, he wrote a really good book on love languages. It's a simple book, and he gives a good taxonomy, and I'll share it with you. He says that there are different ways that people give and receive love. We have different love languages. You'll see all of

these in the Song of Songs this week, and in all of the chapters that keep coming up.

And what he says is this, that “People have a predominant love language that they speak, and the problem is, in marriage, if you and your spouse have a different love language, you might be loving them, but they don’t feel loved, and you don’t feel appreciated because you’re speaking different love languages.” For the couples, it’s a really good exercise to ask, “What is your love language.” And for some people, they’re very high maintenance, two, three, four, five love languages. You don’t have a road on which your love journeys. You have a superhighway, and you have to drive in all lanes, okay? One is words. Some people like to talk.

The more we talk, the more we visit, the more we look one another in the eye, e-mails, phone calls, text messages, conversations, words, words, encourage, compliment, how you feeling, go to hard, how you doing, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, okay? Some it’s gifts. I mean big gifts. Here’s a house. Here’s a car. Here’s a vacation. It could be little gifts, like I was thinking of you today and I bought this little present, or I know that you love blueberry muffins, and so I picked one up for you and brought it home so you could have it for breakfast. It could be big gifts or little. For some, it’s service. Help me. Do something, right? The house is a wreck. Would you help? Would you serve? “No, no, no, no, no, I can’t. I want to talk to you.” “I don’t want to be talked to. I want you to help. Do something.” Some of you love to be served, right?

If it’s breakfast in bed or help with the laundry or pick up the house or run an errand, “Oh, I love you.” Others, it’s time. “Don’t go do anything. Be with me. Be with me. Be — carve out time. Do we have date night? Do we get sit together? Are we gonna be hanging out together? Do we get us time? Do we get couple time? Do we get alone time? I need more time. I don’t get any time. I never get to see you.” For example ~~and, touch, right? And you can tell the touching couples, right? I sat here at the parenting conference last week end, in the back with my wife, Grace, and I saw a whole bunch of touching couples. They’re sitting together. Rubbing each other’s hair and just—~~ and they look like third-base coaches, you know, it’s just like, you know, all about the touch.

And the key is to know: what’s your spouse’s love language, and to speak that language, and then to also let them know what your love language is and to serve one another. And it can change over time. For example, a woman might be really big on gifts and words, and then she has five kids, like my wife, and service becomes very important, like, help. You know, it’s service. So you got to keep checking in, but a good exercise for you couples — dating, engaged, married — on the way home, maybe you go out to a bite to eat, just ask this question: “What’s your love language?” Mine is touch. It has been for 20 years, since I first met Grace. I love to have my hair brushed. I love to have my neck rubbed. I love to have a backrub. I will feign an injury to get a massage. I will. I will fake an injury to get a massage. I love touch. I’m all about — I’m a hold-hand, snuggle.

I love it. I even love it when all the kids pile on me. Got a huge sectional and we’ve got a small couch. I’ll oftentimes sit on the small couch and have all the kids sit on me. I just like to hold all of them. I love that. So who are you and who are you with? Now, that being said, you’re going to see all of these as we go through the book. They’re going to speak to one another. He’s going to give gifts of jewelry to her. They’re going to serve one another in verbal and nonverbal ways. They’re going to spend time together. They’re going to touch one another, and this is outside of the bedroom and in the bedroom. We’ll start in Chapter 1, Verse 8 through 10. It’s a series of long songs between a husband and wife. The book is not in chronological order, and this is a married couple. Chapter 1, Verses 8 through 10.

He says, “If you do not know, oh most beautiful of women.” You men need to start to say this kind of stuff. “Oh, super-sweet, extra-hot hottie, oh.” Lay it on thick. As soon as unfortunately a little embarrassed, you’re getting close to where you should be, and say it all the time. Work it in. Breakfast — you know, “Hey, oh, cereal with a superhot hottie. Good morning, baby.” “Oh, most beautiful among women. Follow in the tracks of the flock and pasture your goats behind — beside the shepherd’s tents. I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariots. Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments. Your neck is a string of jewels.” A bunch of things that men can learn here; first is: she needs to be a priority. He’s a busy, hard-working king. She’s a simple country gal.

She just told him, in the previous verse, “I know you got a long, hard day at work. I’m afraid I’m not going to be able to see you because your schedule is full. How can we be together? When can we meet? Where can we connect?” You men who work hard; want to be providers; take care of your family; praise God, you’ve got to make your wife priority. You do this in your schedule. He tells her, “I’ll be here at this time. We can do lunch. Get together. There’s room for you in my life.” If you don’t make room for your wife in your life, she will then start nagging or complaining. “I never see you. We don’t get time together. I don’t feel like you love me.” And then you’re going to get frustrated because you’ll feel disrespected. So be wise and start by integrating your lives. Here’s what Gracie and I do. Monday night we get together with our laptops.

I have a laptop. She has a laptop. We use the same software, and we’ll put our schedules together. “Honey, what’s your week look like? Okay, you’re going to go do this. I’m going to do this. You need — when can I watch the — you need me to watch the kids here? Great. Our date night is here. What do you want to do for a date? Oh, the kid’s got a birthday party we got to take him to. There’s family activity.” We organize everything on Monday. I know exactly what the forthcoming week looks like for her. She knows for me. She knows, “Oh, Mark’s going to be home for dinner on these nights. We’re going to go on date night these nights. Mark’s going to watch the kids for me here so I can go do these things on this day.” We put our life together.

And then I ask her questions like, “How can I pray for you this week? And who are you meeting with that you’re concerned about?” That way I can call her, “How did your meeting go? How did your appointment go?” I see her calendar. She sees mine. We have cell phones. We can talk to one another, text one another, e-mail one another. When I’m on the road, we have Mac so we can — I chat. Stay in touch. We’ll look down the road, “What are we going to do for Thanksgiving? What are we going to do for Christmas? What are we going to do for vacation? When do the kids have their school breaks?” And we put our whole life together. Why? Because if we just go, we’re not going to be integrated and we won’t even acknowledge it until one of us is really frustrated and angry, and then we’ll probably be unpleasant to one another.

So, preemptive strike: put life together. Make room for one another. You don't do that on date night. Date night's all about romance. This is family busy, getting it all tidied up, and it's good, too, because then you just know, gentlemen, how to pray for your wife, and she knows she's a priority and she knows you're thinking about date night. And she knows you're thinking about family time and that's how you do it. Additionally, she needs compliments. Now he compliments her by saying she's like a horse. You go, "I don't know if I'd do that." I would not recommend it, but the context is very good. She says, "You are like a mare. You're like a horse." And the Bible says elsewhere that he had 12,000 Egyptian horses and 1,400 chariots, and these were an absolute amazing fleet of valuable prize possessions. And he says, "You're like a mare." That's a girl horse.

Goes in along, you know, 12,000 guys' horses. You can imagine there's a lot of enthusiasm among the guy horses, and what he tells her is, "You are like a mare. When you come around, I'm excited. I'm interested. I can't contain myself." She needs to know that she is desirable; that she is loved; that she's exciting. Some of you guys say, "Well, she's not." Well, tell her she is and she'll start acting like it, right. Love her. Encourage her. Nurture her. Bless her. Speak to her. That's what he does. Number 3: she needs a nickname. He calls her, "My love." Oh, that's good. Some of you have bad nicknames for your wife. No. Nice nicknames. I call my wife Beauty. I have for a long time, long time. Sometimes I called her sweetie-pie. There's other stuff I'll call her that I won't tell you, because we're married, and it's good. Your wife wants a nickname.

Sociologists tell us that we only nickname the people we love the most. Your wife, gentleman, needs a nickname. Little secret name between the two of you that she knows, "Oh, that's just for me." It's good. Ladies like that and it's Biblical. Additionally, Number 4, she needs a provider. You single men are oftentimes working on your line, right? So there's a nice girl. What's my opening line? Here's the best one. I have a job, right? That's a great opening line. Women find that so attractive. All right, what she doesn't want to hear is, "My mom has a job and I live with her." That's not a good opening line. A guy needs to have a job. Now this, women, is poor. We've — all right — established her dad's never mentioned. She's probably raised by a single mother. She's from a blue collar home.

She's got sun-burned face from working outside, calluses on her hands, dirt under her fingernails, and he says, "You have ornaments and your neck is strung with jewels." Where did she get those? Those were a gift from a guy with a job: her husband. The Bible says, in the New Testament, "If a man does not provide for the needs of his family, he's denied the faith and he's worse than an unbeliever." We live in this confused culture where men don't take responsibility, don't work hard and don't provide for their family. Does that mean it's a sin for a woman to work until she has kids? No, I'm not saying that. Does that mean after the kids are grown mom can't get a job or a part-time job? I'm not saying that. I am saying, particularly when the kids are little, it's good for mom to be mom and dad to be provider. My wife, Grace, stopped working at 24 — 25.

She'll never have a paid job again. As soon as the kids are grown, she'll be doing ministry with me, and it's my job to pay the bills as the husband and the father and the provider. Now I know this is not popular, but let me tell you that divorce is, and this is one of the reasons why. That the family is to be organized in a way that is Biblical, and here he's the provider. He's the provider. You men should aspire to be providers, and there was a — there was an article that came out this week in a lot of the major news media outlets, not Christian at all, saying that a recent study indicated that men who believe it's their responsibility to be the breadwinner make \$1,000.00 more a month than men who don't think that. Why? I think it's because they feel the responsibility. They take the responsibility, and they step up to it. He's a provider. He provides for her.

You men want to be providers, and you want to be generous with your wife. Now not all you men are going to be rich, and I'm not saying every man needs to make a mint of money, but if he wants to have a wife and children, he needs to make enough to provide for his wife and children. Well, the friends speak. The friends always give their opinion. They say — Chapter 1, Verse 11 — "We will make for you ornaments of gold studded with silver." Here's the big idea. Pick friends who enhance your marriage. Pick friends who give you good counsel. Pick friends who encourage you to love one another. Pick friends who give you Godly advice. Her friends say, "We've got jewelry for you. We're going to help you get dressed up for your big night out. We love you and your husband. We want the best thing for your marriage, and we're here to support you."

You men should have no guy friends who want you to go to the strip club, the bar; to not come home after work; to run around on your wife; who are saying terrible things about her behind her back. You don't want those guy friends. You gals don't want those kind of gal friends that want you to go out, you know, partying; to the club, have a few drinks, take your wedding ring off, or say bad things about your husband. You want to have friends who encourage, married or single — who encourage you to have a better marriage. She then speaks again. Chapter 1, verses 12 through 14. "While the king was on his couch," — today this would be his recliner. It is Biblical — "My nard," — this is a perfume — "Gave forth its fragrance. My beloved is me — is for me a satchet of myrrh that lies between my breasts." We'll talk about that.

"My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En Gedi." Okay, ladies, here's a couple things that men need. She understands this. Number 1: he needs an En Gedi. En Gedi was a desert oasis. There was desert, and En Gedi was this amazing oasis with fresh water, trees, fruit, life. It was a wonderful place to be. Men feel like their life is desert, and they want to come home to En Gedi: to a wife, home, children, that is a place of rest, refreshment, rejuvenation. Here she says — he's laying on the couch and eating. It's Biblical. Let him do it, all right? Might I suggest nachos and wings? Yes, I would. That sounds great. Just thinking about that, I totally lost train of thought. Like wings? I love wings.

See, if your husband loves you and he's working hard all day, and he's out there slugging it out to feed the family, and the whole day has been a desert. No encouragement. No support. No replenishment. He comes home. You want to greet him at the door and be En Gedi. "I love you. Welcome home, sweetheart." Don't start with the honey-do list. Don't start railing on him. "Boy, the kids, man, they're terrible. They're just like their dad. You got to spank him and deal with her and, you know, we need to paint the house and the grass is too high and, you know, ah." He comes home not to En Gedi, but to purgatory. Like man, this is terrible. I'm trapped and it's terrible. You want to be En Gedi. You want your home to be En Gedi.

One guy said it to me recently. I said, "How's your marriage going?" He said, "Great." I said, "Really, what happened?" He said, "I came home from

work the other day. My wife greeted me, and sitting next to my recliner chair was a plate of nachos and a drink." She said, "Welcome home. I know you've had a rough day." He said, "I love that woman." Who wouldn't? Who wouldn't? And, you know, if you ladies then come to that kind of husband 30 minutes and say, "Sweetheart, I need to talk to you about a couple of things," he'll be like, "Great." Or, "There's something I need you to do for me," be like, "Happy to." All right. It's all about respect. It's all about understanding. It's all about being En Gedi. So here is the dangerous question for you married couples to ask on your way home. I'm going to give you a series of questions.

The first is this: what does En Gedi look like for you? What does En Gedi look like for you? The wife may tell the husband, "Our bedroom is just devastated. There's junk everywhere. It's cluttered. We got kids. There's Barbies and G.I. Joes and Juju Fruits, and there's a laptop and you return an e-mail." It's not En Gedi, right? It's not En Gedi. One wife told her husband — I know this couple well — she said, "Well, for me, En Gedi is we tuck the kids in bed. We sit in the tub, drink a glass of wine and visit." I look at him. I'm like, "Any objections?" He's like, "No, I vote yes." "Okay, great, we have unanimous vote. That's En Gedi. Go enjoy your En Gedi." Additionally, men need something else. She speaks of this here. "My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts." Okay? Now the men are hoping I say this, so I will.

Ladies, your body is a gift. You share it with your husband, and that is to him, part of En Gedi. It's a place of rest and refreshment, and she says that between her breasts is this perfume, "nard", that would melt off the body heat and then would give this wonderful fragrance, and she said, "That's where he spends a lot of time also." Praise be to God, okay? You might be surprised that the Bible talks about these things, and it does. There are other places that it talks about this. These are very important verses, and Christians get uncomfortable, like, with this. Like, "Oh, my golly, this is not appropriate." This book is 3 — Song of Songs is 3,000 years old. So, praise God. Now, Christians, in their discomfort with that verse have made some very curious allegorical interpretations.

And, since you asked, I will share them with you. Some say that she is here speaking of the Shekinah Glory between the two cherubim that stood over the Ark of the Covenant. No. One other old commentator says that the two breasts are the Old and New Testament — the pure milk of the Word. I'm not even making this up, and one says that it's the sachet of myrrh is Christ between the Old and New Testaments. No, it's not. It's a woman who shares her body with her husband, and it is, for him, part of En Gedi. Amen? Amen. So we will continue, Chapter 1, Verse 15. He speaks to her again. "Behold, you are beautiful." Keep it coming. You men can't say, "You look nice," and then just wait for years. You got to keep saying it.

She needs to see herself through your eyes. She doesn't know you're thinking. So tell her. "You look great." And the compliments have to be specific. You can't just say, "You look nice." She — no. Do you like her shoes? Do you like her handbag? Do you like her clothes? Do you like her hair? Do you like her makeup? Do you like her eyes? Do you like her sense of humor? Do you like her smirk? Do you like it when she snorts because you told a funny joke?" Tell her. Tell her what it is. If she does something nice, tell her she's a total sweetheart. Tell her how great she is. Let her know, all the time, everything. You should be like a running sports commentator, right? You should just always play-by-play. "You look nice. That was sweet. Thank you. You smell like vanilla ice cream, praise the Lord." Just keep telling her. Okay?

Because she won't see herself through your eyes unless you know her — unless you let her know what it is that you're feeling and thinking and seeing. "You are beautiful. My love, behold, you are beautiful. Your eyes are doves. You are beautiful, my beloved, truly delightful." Doves represent peace and tranquility and purity and faithfulness. Doves only have one faithful mate for their whole life. Say, "When I look at you, I see peace, tranquility, purity, beauty and fidelity. I love looking at you." When you tell her this, look her in the eye. He's looking her in the eye. He's looking her in the eye. She might be a little sheepish. She might be a little coy. She might be a little embarrassed, but, deep down in her heart, she likes that, right, ladies? How nice is it your husband looks you right in the eye?

"I appreciate you. I enjoy you. I like looking at you. Thank you for serving me that way. You know, the other day, when you encouraged me, that meant a ton. The other day when you held my hand, that fixed everything." Tell her. Just look her in the eye and tell her. Well, she responds. You notice they are speaking to one another. Verse 16 through — Chapter 2, Verse 1. "Our couch is green," she says, "The beams of our house are cedars. Our rafters are pine. I am a Rose of Sharon, a Lily of the Valley." Here's what you need, men. You need a home to put the woman in, all right? You do. That's why a man needs to leave his mother and father, Genesis says, go get his own job; his own house; his own life; take responsibility for himself. Then he can marry a woman. Then he can be one with her physically.

Now you may not be a rich guy, but you need to be a guy who can provide a home for your wife. She says, "I love our couch. I love our home. I love our ceiling. Thank you so much. This is a nice place to live. I'm glad that we're here." And when you get married initially, it's usually not very impressive. Grace and I, our first apartment was a bedroom apartment. We were 21-year-old college students, and it was 250 bucks a month: little living room, little dining room, little bathroom, little bedroom, but it was ours. It was simple and it was safe and it was clean. You want simple, clean, right? Do the best you can. Then we upgraded. We got our big \$500.00-a-month apartment. Had a deck and a little more room, and had a territorial view. Okay, little better: small, safe complex.

Then we upgraded to our big \$1,000.00-a-month rental house some years later. Now we have our own house. We have a little yard, and got a few bedrooms, and now we're getting somewhere, and over the years we've finally gotten into the place that we're — I think we're done. At least that's what my wife tells me. We're done. We're moved in. We're settled, and what I really wanted to do was to find a house that fit Grace. We want to have kids. We want to entertain. I want to work from home. There's all these things that we aspire to, and you don't start there. I mean, we were married, I don't know, what, 13 years, before we got the house that we ultimately think we're going to settle in long term. You work toward it. You got to be a good steward.

You got to hang in there, and so what I did with Grace is I made a long list of questions, because she's very humble. She doesn't ask for anything. She's very low-maintenance, and I said, "Honey, what do you need for a house?" "Oh, I'm fine. I don't need anything. I'm okay." Said, "Sweetheart,

seriously, I'm going to give you a list of questions, and I'm asking you in love. Answer every one of them. How many square feet? How many bedrooms? Laundry upstairs or downstairs? Parking? Where do you want the study? What kind of kitchen? How we gonna entertain? What kind of playground? We got a bunch of kids. Do we need hardwood floors?" You know, just all of these questions. "What kind of yard, safety, play areas for the kids?" I just made the list of everything I could think of, and I asked her to fill it out, and she graciously did.

And then I started praying for and looking for that house. Well, you may not get it, but at least she knew, "My husband loves me. He's trying to create a home that, if we're going to have a big family and do this life, it works for me and it's En Gedi for him, and it could be a place to be En Gedi for us." God was gracious. I won't tell you the whole story, but we really — by God's grace, we're there. It's En Gedi for me. I love being home with my family, and Grace would tell you it works for us in the complexity of our life, and that's what she's doing. She's thanking her husband. "Thank you for taking care of us. Thank you for building this home. Thank you for furnishing this home. Thank you that this actually works for us."

Next question you need to ask then, on the way home, if you're a married couple, is this. "What do we need to change in our house?" Is it cluttered, disorganized? Is there junk in your bedroom? Is there a TV in your bedroom so you don't talk and read and hang out? Just sit there and watch TV: not very romantic. What needs to change for your house to be a place of En Gedi and delight? So you ask one another, "What do we need to change?" Maybe you need to change where you live or it may mean you need to make some adjustments to the place that you are. Well, then he speaks to her again. She says, "I'm a Rose of Sharon." And that was a wildflower, common flower. She's saying, "I'm plain. I don't look like all the beautiful girls. Every girl looks like me. Why are you so infatuated with me?"

He says, Chapter 2, Verse 2, "As a lily is among brambles, so is my love among the young women." He tells her again, "Honey, I love you. I like looking at you. I like being with you. I like kissing you." All right? That's a one-woman man. His heart is for her, and he keeps reassuring her because some women don't understand the absolute gift that they are. Maybe their dad, their friends, their boyfriends, didn't cherish these ladies as the ought. Say, "What's so special about me? Why is he so excited about me?" Keep telling her. Keep telling her exactly why you picked her, gentlemen, and exactly why you pick her again every day. Well then she responds, and this is escalation, and in this next series of dialogues it gets very graphic, very frank. She initiates it. She talks very openly, very freely. She is not an inhibited woman.

Many men would want a woman who is as uninhibited as this woman, and the answer is they didn't start here. They got there through love, service, communication; buys a house; respectable guy, cares for his wife, all of that. She says — Chapter 2, Verses 3 through 6. "As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men." Right? You walk through a forest and there's one apple tree, all right. That's out of place: very distinguishable and unique. That's what he is. "With great delight I sit in his shadow and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me." A lot here. Couple of things you men need to know.

This is what she is saying. First of all, a woman needs a protector. Right, "His banner over me is love." The banner was the flag. When nations — this is a military term — when nations would go to war, right, the battle's raging, it's hand-to-hand combat, and then the men who were in war get scattered and divided, and now you're in danger. You don't know where to go. The banner was the flag that would get lifted up, and as soon as you saw the flag, your goal was to fight your way back to the flag because the soldiers then would regroup, from that army, around the flag, and that was a safe place to be and if you go there, you're going to live. What she says is: "He's my banner. If I stay close to him, I'm safe. If I'm under his leadership, I'm protected. He cares for me. He loves me. He looks out for me. He defends me."

All right, I Peter 3 says that "Men should not be harsh with their wives." If you are dating a man, ladies, and he's harsh with you; yells at you; intimidates you; ever gets physically violent with you in any way; threatens physical violence, run for your life. He's not a banner. He's an enemy. The man you want to be with is the man you feel safest with, protected by, loved by: emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally, financially. He wants to protect me. Okay. You need to know, this is a huge part of my heart for men, and this is an enormous part of my relationship with Grace. I mean, I still remember, when I first started seeing her, she went off the college. I was still in high school, and they ran out of housing. So they put her in a guy's dorm. I was like what?

So I got in the car and I drove to the university, and I knocked on all the doors of all the guys on her floor. "Hi, my name is Mark. I love this woman. Anyone touches her, talks to her, thinks about talking about touching her, I will beat them." Literally, I threatened 20 guys, just knocked on every door. No way she's gonna get messed with, no way. Later on she transferred to another university, WSU. She was five hours away, and she moved out there and her phone wasn't hooked up yet, and we didn't have cell phones. And I told her, "When you get there, go to a pay phone. Call me. Let me know you got there safe." Well, she didn't call. So I got in the car and I drove there. Five hours, the day I had to work, and I knocked on the door. She answered it, and I said, "Well, you didn't call." She says, "I forgot." I said, "Are you okay?" She said, "I'm okay."

I said, "Okay, good." Got in the car and drove home — Just checking — 600 miles. Who cares? It's Grace; doesn't matter. Grace is worth 600 miles any day. Just make sure she's all right. Walk her to the car. Look after her. Tend to her. Make sure she's okay. The other day, we're going on a walk. I'm always thinking about this stuff. She's holding my hand. We go for a lot of family walks, and I said, "No, no, honey, I need you to hold my left hand." She said, "Why?" I said, "Because this is the longest shoulder of the road and if somebody skips the curb and one of us gets hit by a car, it needs to be me." Some of you are like, "I don't like that theology of headship." Here's what it means. He gets hit by the car. That's what it means. I walk closest to the street. If one of us is going to get run over, that's my job. Husbands: love your wives.

You get hit by the car. That's how it goes. That's how it goes. Even when we sit in restaurants — maybe I'm freakish, maybe. I will always face the door so I see who's coming and going and what's going on, and I have her sit up against the wall, and I sit on the end, because if something goes down, I'm on it. And she's gonna be all right. I'm that guy: always looking out. Make sure Grace is okay, even emotionally. People send her nasty e-

mails, text messages, talk trash about me, leave the church and want to take parting shots at her. She has nothing to do with any of it. So I've even put a white blacklist on her e-mail, and some people can e-mail her and the rest come to me. Delete, delete, delete, delete, delete, delete. So that she doesn't have to feel bad, because people are taking shots at her. That's my girl. No shots. That's the rule. Okay?

And this is part of our theology. "Husbands, love your wife as Christ loves the church." What does that mean? You make sure that she is safe. That's what it means. He needs to be a protector, and he needs to be told by his wife what he's doing and what to do. Now a lot of women don't feel comfortable talking like this woman. She says, "Put your arm under my head. Put your other hand in a place that Pastor Mark can't talk about, but I really like. Take your time. We're going to need to stop for snacks. My blood sugar level will drop. This could be a while." That's what they're saying. "Refresh me with raisins and,"— right? That's what they're talking about. Now some of you ladies are like, "Can we talk about these things when we're intimate? Can I speak?" Yes. "Well, I don't want to boss him around." He would appreciate it if you did.

All right, if you told him, "Do this. Do this. Do this. Do this." You're like, "Am I bossy?" He's like, "Yes, praise God. Now I know what I'm doing." Now, the truth is most men, and particularly newly married men, we don't know what we're doing, but we pretend like we do because otherwise we're embarrassed, and you could talk and tell him, "Do this. Do this. Do this. Never do that again." Just let him know. Every husband, deep down, wants to take good care of and satisfy his wife, and if she tells him in the intimate moments what to do and what not to do, it helps him, and she tells him what she enjoys and what she is willing to do. Okay? Now the big, big debate — here we go — is this little line here. "With great delight I sat in his shadow and his fruit was sweet to my taste." What is she talking about? The commentators freak out at this point.

Joseph Dillow has the best commentary on the Song of Songs that I have ever read. He says, quote, "We have a faint and delicate reference to an oral/genital caress." She is telling him, "When you enjoy this, I do as well." Somebody said, "Are they allowed to talk about that?" Yes, it's in the Bible. All Scripture is God-breathed. What this means is, married couples who are Christians should talk about everything sexually. Nothing's — you're not allowed to sin, but do you want to try this? You want to try it? Talk about it; discuss it. Put it out on the table.

One of the saddest counseling sessions I ever had was some years ago. Husband and a wife, both, around the same time, committed adultery on one another. Brought them into the office, I said, "Okay, ma'am, tell me what happened." She says, "Well, he's always working and I don't get time with him and I'm home with the kids all day, and I just wanted somebody to talk to, and I met this guy. And, you know, we went out to lunch and started visiting. Next thing you know we had an affair." I said, "So you wanted to have lunch and an adult conversation?" "Yeah." I asked him, "What happened?" He said, "Well, there's something I've always wanted to try and we've never done it, and this woman approached me. She was real aggressive, and she offered to do it out of the blue and I did it." I said, "Okay, there's no excusing your sin."

I said, "Let me ask you this. Husband, would you have been willing to meet her for lunch a couple days a week, just to connect with her?" He said, "I would have loved that. Why didn't you ask? I didn't know." She said, "Well, I'm totally willing to try that. I've been curious about it myself. How come you didn't tell me?" Instead of a conversation, we had an adultery. I'd encourage you to have a conversation. "I'd like to try this. I'd like to try this. Can you serve me this way?" "Yes. Can you serve me this way?" "Yes." We're Christians. We serve one another. They talk openly and freely and frankly. And it — it's not crass talk and it's not clinical talk. They're not talking like a locker room, and they're not talking like medical doctors. They're talking like a Godly married couple should.

So here is the dangerous question I give you married couples for your trip home. Here is the question you ask one another. "How can I please you? How can I please you?" And you please one another. You take care of one another. You satisfy one another. Now some of — at this point will question motive. Hear my heart. We will have hundreds and thousands of couples marry in Mars Hill church. We don't want you to commit adultery. We don't want you to get divorced. We don't want you to be bitter against one another because you feel like you're not being taken care of. We want you to love one another, serve one another. We want you to make love to one another. We want you to grow old together. We want you to be faithful to one another. We want you to be absolutely delighted in the marriage covenant that God has given you. That's what we want.

That's what I want for you. I don't want to be meeting with your kids and grandkids, counseling them through the divorce or the adultery. I want to be meeting with your kids and grandkids, having them say, "You know, mom and dad, grandma and grandpa, they love one another. They're affectionate. They love Jesus. They've been faithful to one another." I want that. I want that, and I want, out of your love, a legacy of generations of faithful, Christian, free, fun, enjoyable, passionate, liberated, Christian marriage. That's what we want for you. That's all that we want for you, and, to do that, you're going to have to talk freely, frankly, frequently about what you want and don't want, and you need to have this conversation with your kids. If you can't even talk to your spouse, good luck talking to your kids.

Lots of kids get born at Mars Hill. Parents have been asking this question. "When do I have the talk with my kids?" First of all, you don't have "the talk". You have lots of talks. You're talking about it all the time. As they grow older, you've got to keep talking about it. You should start, I would recommend, with your kids, having this kind of conversation by about age 10. The first exposure to internet pornography is statistically age 11. You don't want that to be first exposure. There was an article, as well, on this act that they are discussing in the Washington Post, September 16, 2005. Here is the headline. "Half of All Teens Have Had Oral Sex". All right. There are married couples that are Christian in this church, I'm sure of it, who haven't discussed this, and their children are doing it with boyfriends and girlfriends.

Here's what the story says. "Slightly more than half of America teenagers, age 15 to 19, have engaged in oral sex with females and males reporting similar levels of experience, according to the most comprehensive national survey of sexual behaviors ever released by the Federal government. The proportion increases with age to about 70 percent of all 18- and 19-year-olds. Several leaders of organizations that study or work with youth express surprise at the level of girls' participation. 'You assume that females are more likely to give, males more likely to receive,' said Jennifer Manlove" — I didn't even make that up. I didn't — "Who directs fertility research for the organization Child Trends. 'We were surprised that the percentages were

similar.' Slightly more girls than boys have intercourse before they turn 20."

"In addition, other national data indicate that the proportion of high school girls who have one-night stands, as well as nonromantic sexual relationships equals boys. This is a point of major social transition. James Wagner, President of Advocates For Youth, a reproductive health organization said, 'The data are now coming out and roiling the idea that boys are the hunters and that girls are the prey. It absolutely defies the stereotype.' The data also underscored the fact that many young people, particularly those from upper and middle class white families, simply do not consider oral sex to be as significant as their parents' generation does. 'Oral sex is far less intimate than intercourse. It's a different kind of relationship,' said Claire Brendice, Professor of pediatrics at the University of California at San Francisco."

"At 50 percent, we're talking about a major social norm. It is part of kids' lives." When you parents talk to your children, don't just say, "You need to be a virgin." You need to then define what a virgin is. There are innumerable teenage girls who put a promise ring on their finger, and told their daddy, "I will keep myself," and are doing that, not knowing that it counts. You and your spouse need to talk freely, and talk to your children specifically. Lastly, Chapter 2, Verse 7, for those of you who are single. She speaks to her single gal friends, "I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field that you do not stir or awaken love until it pleases." The question that keeps coming in from the single people is, "Where's the line? Where's the line? Where's the line?" And that's the wrong question.

What you're asking is, "How much sin can we do before we get in trouble?" It's an issue of the heart. The Bible says in Ephesians 5 that "Among God's people there shouldn't even be a hint of sexual immorality." I Corinthians 7 says that "A single man should not touch a woman sexually." Titus says that "Men who are Christians should treat Christian women as sisters." Can you love your sister? Yes. Can you talk to your sister? Yes. Can you hang out with your sister? Yes. Can you really enjoy your sister? Yes. Can you pray with your sister? Yes. Do you touch sexually your sister? No. No. You don't. The issue is not: where is the line? The question is: when is the time? Again, the question is not: where is the line? The question is: when is the time? And when is the time? Marriage, marriage.

Some of you say, "Oh, but we should cohabitate. We should live together and sleep together to practice for marriage." Cohabitation is living and sleeping together, and it also includes, if you've got two different places, and, occasionally, you have a sleepover. It all counts. Statistically, between 1978 and the year 2008, and all of my statistical research in this sermon comes from a PhD Professor in the Women's Study and Sociology Department at the University of Virginia. It is full, mainline, non-Christian, sociological data. Between 1978 and 2008, cohabitators in the U.S. rose from one million to five million couples, over 90 percent. 9 out of 10 Americans marry. 40 percent of first marriages end in divorce. 60 percent of divorces involve children. One-third of all births are to single women.

A quarter of unmarried women, ages 25 to 39, are presently cohabitating; half of all women cohabitate at some point. One-half of all marriages are preceded by cohabitation. The most likely person to cohabitate is between the ages of 20 and 24. Here's what happens if you cohabitate. Higher divorce rate in marriage. See, the big lie that Satan says is, "God's wrong. Live and sleep together. Practice for marriage. It'll help you decide whether or not you'll be married or you should be married." And the truth is there is no practice for covenant. Cohabitation is not preparation for covenant. Two people living two lives, sharing one bed, is not the same as one man, one woman, coming together as one flesh. You don't practice for covenant.

You practice for covenant by living in covenant relationship with Jesus, and that's the only preparation for covenants of marriage that you need. Not living and sleeping together. Those who do live together, sleep together, and then get married, have higher propensity of divorce, are three times more likely to be depressed than married couples. Cohabitating women are, two, as likely as married women to be beaten and sexually assaulted. Cohabitating women are nine times more likely than married women to be murdered by their partner. Virgins who marry are much less likely to divorce: 37 percent less likely for men; 24 less likely for women, and, statistically speaking, the evidence is in, virgins who marry stay married and are happier and enjoy more sex. Bottom line: Satan's still a liar. Bottom line: God still tells the truth.

God isn't trying to keep anyone from pleasure and joy. He's trying to compel them toward marriage, so that they can have maximum pleasure and joy. God is a good God. He wants good things for us, and when he tells us not to do something, it's good. When he allows us to do something, it's good, and Satan is a liar, and people don't believe God. They instead follow Satan, and the result is their lives are devastated and generations are devastated. We want the best for you, and the best for you is what the Bible teaches: chastity until marriage; fidelity in marriage. That's what the Bible teaches. That being said, we're going to answer some questions. You may have some. I'm going to bring out my lovely wife, Grace. She's a little bit sick today, but — "Hey, baby." She will help me answer question, because the guy and the gal in the book are talking.

"Hi. How are you? This is my wife, Grace." I got a couch for us, and maybe the guys could throw up the first question and we can get right to work. West Seattle. Oh, boy. I'll get a glass of water. "My wife does not view sex as gross, but she has absolutely no interest." Probably should have talked about that before the marriage. "Is this my cross to bear?" So your wife is like crucifixion. Just so you know, that's not good for the glory of God. I would say your marriage doesn't glorify God at all. It's for gals. Why don't you answer that one, Gracie? It's about a wife.

If she doesn't view it as gross, I would — I wonder how she does view it? Because if she views it as a beautiful thing that's a gift from the Lord, then why would she not want to receive that and participate in that? So there would probably be some deeper issues, obviously to discuss, but if there's abuse in the past, if there's any harm that was done to her that has distorted that view of beauty that God intended it to be, then that needs to be talked about, probably with someone: a counselor, or someone in the redemption group process, because if it truly is a gift, as the Bible says, and it's beautiful, then God intends us to enjoy it. Then we want — you need to want to get to that place where you see it as that, and participate in it as that, and if there's fears that are keeping her from that, God doesn't want her to be bound by that.

The enemy would love to see her bound by that so that your marriage can't continue to grow and flourish and be enjoyed, but the Lord doesn't want that

for you. So to start to have those conversations is important, so that you can open up and start to walk in the direction the Bible is asking us to walk.

Do you think she's in sin?

Yeah. Yeah. She's not loving her husband, so — I mean, I can imagine — the fact that he's feeling like this is his cross to bear, obviously, he's experiencing pain too. If he feels like it's that deep of an issue, it is. It's their marriage, and it's the closest place in your marriage, and you want to continue to build that. And if you can't even get to that place, it's hard to think of continuing life together in that way. So, yeah, I believe she's sinning against him, and, again, she may have been sinned against or harmed in some way. So if she trusts her husband and trusts that the Lord has a better way, then — then trust that God can heal her from that, and move toward what God intended.

Yeah, and it's hard, too, because I Corinthians 7 is really where you need to camp on this. It says, "Do not deprive one another, but by mutual consent, and for a time. Then come together again, so that Satan doesn't get in the middle of your relationship." If you're not having intimacy frequently enough that both people are satisfied and cared for, he says, that Satan gets in there. He gets in there in multiple ways, but the primary two are bitterness. You just start to despise your spouse, because they're not acting as a married person should, or temptation. Other people start to become very attractive, and then you're in real danger. So if you love Satan, continue this. If you love your husband, repent of this sin. Overcome whatever barriers are in the midst, and I want you to see this right now.

When you go to bed, there's you and your husband, and that space in the middle is where Satan is sleeping, and when you come together, you're not leaving room for him. As well, I have met guys whose wives use this as a power play, control him. Manipulate him. "If I don't get what I want, I don't get what I need, I'm going to use this as a bargaining chip." That's disgusting, and that's very disrespectful, and I've seen guys who are so frustrated because, as well, they want to have children. And their intimacy is so infrequent that they wonder if they're ever even going to be able to have pregnancy. So the key is to see that these are not alternative lifestyle choices, these are sins. Next one: Ballard. "I'm an engaged gal, living with my," — dang it! "Fiancé."

"We are already having sex. How can I talk to my fiancé about waiting now?" I'll be here after the serve. You bring him right here, seriously. This is Ballard. I'm here. We'll do this. We'll do this. So there's no need to talk to him. I would love to, and I know that you ask this question because you're at Mars Hill and you already know what the answer is. The dudes handle the dudes in a dude way. So, that guy can meet in front of the stage after service, find your cup. I'll see you in about half an hour. True story, okay? And that lady, she can understand that we love her, and that we want her to be loved and cherished, and this man is not loving her as Christ loves the church. He's not. It's a sin, and you men need to know that we take this stuff very, very seriously, and we deal with the men as men.

And it doesn't mean that God can't forgive and God can't heal, but it does mean that you must repent for any of that to really be transformed, and so we're serious on this issue, and whoever this guy is, I'll see you in about half an hour. Next question.

And you need to say "No" to him from now on, because you know it's a sin, and you need to just draw that line and the guy can be dealt with, too, but you need to — you have accountability with your relationship before the Lord, and you need to say no.

Yep. You're so sweet about it, all right. I — is this a new one from Ballard? Okay. "I've been in sin with my girlfriend, long-distance, and I can't seem to stop without breaking up. Any suggestions?"

Break up.

Yeah. It's like, I work at the liquor store and I can't stop drinking. You probably should work somewhere else, right? That's — if you can't stop, you're not ready for a relationship. Your relationship with Jesus needs to get straight. If you're like, "I can't stop sinning." Well, then don't invest in that relationship. Invest in your relationship with Jesus, because the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. If you don't have self-control, you don't need to continue to sin. You need to repent, and meet with a pastor. Get in an accountability group with dudes. Get in a redemption group if you're a porn or sex addict, and get some help. The last thing two sinners need is to sin together. All right.

If two people want to walk in holiness, they can have a — an encouraging relationship of accountability, but if it's — if the foundation of the relationship is sin, you can't build on that. You can't build emotional, spiritual, mental intimacy on sexual sin. You can't do it, and so I think you know the answer. The answer is you need to break off the relationship. Tell that person that you're not ready for a relationship, and get help to overcome whatever the problem is that you seem to be absolutely enslaved by.

And see her as a sister in the Lord, and see if that helps you stop.

Yeah, if not — okay, next one. West Seattle. "My male friend does not want to marry. I think there is no future and we should say we are friends, and nothing more, but he calls me his girlfriend." Man — dudes — "Will you be my girlfriend?" "Are we dating?" "No." "Do you want to get married?" "No." "Where are we going?" "Nowhere." "Will you be my girlfriend?" "No — well" — you're like a dog chasing a fire truck. It's like, if you caught it, what are going to do with it? You know, like, what? No, he's not even your friend. Ladies, that's not your friend. Some guy who doesn't want to court you; doesn't want to pursue you; doesn't want to marry you; and just wants to call you girlfriend until he finds the girl he really wants to be with? That's not a friend, all right. I mean, if this was my daughter, I'd be doing prison ministry from the inside.

I mean, this is just wrong. It's like you don't — men, you don't pursue a woman unless you are wanting to seriously consider marriage with her. Otherwise you're violating a trust. That's not acceptable. Men, you should not be looking for a girlfriend. You should be looking for a wife. Jeez. It's the big "E" on the eye chart, gentlemen. Don't miss that. Anything else? This is like good cop/bad cop. Some week, I'm going to be good cop, but

you're the sweetie-pie. Anything you want to add?

No. That was good.

That was good. Okay. "I'm single, love Jesus, and have a job." Good. Nice start. "Want a wife, but don't have one. How can I use my desire for a wife to fuel good works instead?" Okay. First of all, this is a guy whose heart's in the right place, right? We loves Jesus, working, responsible; desirous for a wife. I want to be a husband. I want to be a father. What I would say is this. We studied this in the book of Ruth. I always tell guys, "Pay attention to the women that God puts in front of you." All right? Boaz is out and Ruth is right in front of him in the providence of God. Maybe not what he had on his little check list. I'm looking for a Moabite. A race who's the product of incest, who's a widow, not a virgin, who comes with a bitter mother-in-law and is homeless." Right, that probably wasn't on his list, but that was Ruth.

But she loved God, and she was amazing, and it's one of the great love stories of the whole Bible. So I always tell guys, "Pay attention to the women or the woman that God puts in front of you in his providence." So what I'd say is, if you're loving God and serving God, and you're living your life for the glory of God, look at the women who are doing the same around you, all right? If they're loving God and serving God, pay attention to the women that God puts in front of you. Too many guys look over amazing women and they need to pay attention to those women that are in front of them, but you're at Mars Hill, so you're in a good place. You're in a good place. Next question: Ballard. "What are your thoughts on stay-at-home dads?" We did this in the last one.

"What are your thoughts on stay-at-home dads if the woman really wants to work, or even if both want or need to work?" This is where attendance goes down. You all came to hear this, "Oh, have sex." And this is the part that people don't like. You want to go first? You want to soften them up, then I'll —

Oh, yeah.

How about your take it from the woman's perspective?

Well, I would say it's hard to respect a man that's not willing to provide. Biblically, in Timothy, you're worse than an unbeliever if you don't provide for the needs of your family. It's a pretty strong statement. Basically we need to follow what the Word says, and if it's willing to address the issue, you need to take it seriously. We talked about this earlier and just how different our kids would look if he was home with the kids versus me.

That's a very sweet way to say it.

It's just a good idea for me to be with them, but —

I agree. I agree. I agree.

No, you have to spend time with them, but it's — we're built — as women we're built to be home with our kids, and the Titus 2 woman, we're supposed to be loving our husband and children, busy at home, homeward-focused, pure, kind, self-controlled, so that we don't malign the Word of God. That's a pretty big statement, too. It's an honor to be a mom and raise the next generation. It's a huge responsibility and to just toss that aside like it's — you know, can be done by anyone — it's a — I would say it's a selfish view. Our children need us as mothers. We are the ones that tend to their needs and can see every little thing that they need emotionally, physically, we are built to be able to recognize those things. So it's great if a dad can — a dad absolutely has to be a part of the equation. That's the best, ideal scenario, but a mom is built to be at home with her kids.

Yeah, and guys, meditate on this verse. Paul tells Timothy in the New Testament, "If any man does not provide for the needs of his family, he's denied the faith and he's worse than an unbeliever." You say, "Well, that's cultural." No, that's in the Bible. You live in an absolutely perverted, corrupted, stupid, culture. It's a culture of hook-up, shack-up, break-up. It's a culture in which men act like Peter Pan and their boys way too long. A lot of guys think they're men that they — just because they could shave. I always say there's a lot of boys who could shave. If you cannot provide for your family, you are not a man. Now maybe you get injured; you get sick; you get cancer: totally understood. We're not legalists, but if you're an able-bodied man, your job is to provide for the needs of your family.

Your job before God, act of worship, responsibility, is to provide for your family. Does that mean you need a huge home and a new car? No. It may mean that you need to live a simple standard of living. It may mean that you don't have to get into the world's system of values that your status is determined by the vehicle you drive. Your dignity and value and worth as a human being is contingent upon your Zip code, but too many guys take too little responsibility. This would actually be, at Mars Hill church, if there were not extreme extenuating circumstances, a case for church discipline. Okay. You need to know that. Okay. Many of you will now leave, and I would say, without any Biblical grounds. "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." That's what Paul says.

Statistically, if you want to have healthy kids, enduring marriage, it's not just that you do it in a 1950's traditional ways, but the Scriptures say the man lovingly leads the family, provides and protects, the woman helps him, is his mate, right alongside, equal image-bearer of God. They're different with different roles and tasks. That she is primarily responsible for the homeward orientation, and he provides and protects for his family. If a woman is to respect her husband, he needs to be like that, and if they want to safeguard their marriage from divorce, they need to organize their like that, and, statistically, if they want to do best for their children, they'll organize their home like that.

There are occasionally rare, extenuating circumstances — we're not legalists, we consider those — to be honest with you, if you want to have a good marriage, a good family that honors God, you need to establish your home according to Biblical principles, and there is nothing in Scripture — there is

nothing. I've read the whole book. You could debate with me all day. It's not there. You have to go to the culture and find worldly wisdom and then try and sanctify it, but it's just not in the scriptures, and I would say, as well, we've got five kids. Do you know how much we would need to make for daycare? Do you know how different my children would be if Gracie wasn't willing to be their mom and be home with them?

I can't even fathom 2-year-old Gideon and his flip-flops, walking away, 5 days a week, for 9 or 10 hours to have someone else raise him. Could not — my wife's crying even thinking about it. So thank you. Thank you, sweetie-pie.

I love it.

Yeah. I'll pray for us. Father God, I pray against the enemy, his servants and their works and effects. I thank you for my wife. God, we worked through some hard patches, but we're one by your grace. I thank you that I get to protect her and provide for her. I adore her. God, I thank you that she helps me and she loves and she's En Gedi for me. I thank you for five beautiful babies that we love. I thank you that she's their mommy. I thank you that she's home with them. I thank you that you have provided. I thank you that you have enabled me to take care of them. I thank you, God, that I get so much dignity as a man from making sure that she and the children are protected and provided for. I thank you that Grace appreciates and enjoys that.

I thank you that she's instilled that in our children so that they thank their daddy, and they appreciate their daddy, and they love their mommy. And, God, I thank you. I wish, God, everyone could see what our family looks like; what our children are like; what our marriage is like; what our home is like; and I pray that they would know that Satan is a liar, and that culture has nothing to offer. And that the Scriptures are true, because God is good. I pray, God, for protection for the marriages and families, and I pray for the pathetic, impotent, weak, incompetent men who are immature and irresponsible who don't want to carry their load, and in the name of equality dump it on their wife and children, when they should be men and shoulder-up and carry it well for God's glory and their dignity. I pray for our men to be men, and I pray for that in Jesus' name. Amen.