Marriage Panel

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[0:00] All right. Well, tonight we are doing a panel question and answer with several married couples. So, panelists, if you could make your way up to the stage. Give them a warm welcome. All right. Well, as you guys know, we've been doing a dating and relationship series. This is now our third week, final week of that.

And so, tonight we're just going to finish with a panel talking to these three couples who have been in our church for years now and married for years as well. So, our goal in this is to help you guys prepare for marriage, have some good examples to look to of marriage in our church, and also just to help kind of get you thinking about marriage and what the future will hold for you and what to look for in a spouse.
So, we've got three couples up here. I'm going to let you guys just introduce yourselves and tell us your names, how long you've been married, how long you've been in our church, if you've got any kids or grandkids, maybe even in the room.
So, we'll start down there. Toby, you want to start? Yes, we are Toby and Sarah Blair. This is Toby, Sarah. It's worth a Y, not an I. Toby.
All right. So, we've been married for 20 years, going on 21 years in the church for 18, 19-ish years. Yep, somewhere in there.
[1:43] And then we have two children that are in this room, Henry and Landry Blair. Yeah. Thank you for pointing them out. That's good. All right. Is that it? Is that our, we can cover that? Okay, thanks.

Hi, everybody. I'm Steve Bobo, my wife Mary. We've been married 52 years. We're the oldies here. We've got two kids, four grandkids, and one great-grandkid on the way. Tyson Townsend is one of our grandkids. He's not here tonight, but he's in your group, okay?
Okay. Thank you. How long have we been in the church? Oh, we've been in the church 30 years. We moved here from Louisiana a long time ago.
I'm Benjamin Staten. This is my wife Mary. We've been married for three years now. Yeah, I've been married for three years. I've been at this church my whole life. She's been here for about three years.
[3:08] We have a daughter, Rosie, one and a half, and a boy on the way in August. Man. Congrats. Do y'all have a name picked out?

No. No name. That's all right. You've still got time. Joseph. Oh, what a name. What a name. So a couple of fun facts. Some of you will remember. Mary used to have Hadley's job here, so ladies, you remember her and gentlemen.
Yeah. And at the far end, Toby with a Y coached me in seventh grade basketball. Mustang North. Mustang North. So, yeah. You must sing cults out there. Yeah.
All right. So I want to hear about you guys' dating relationship as well as marriage. So thinking back to your first date, where did you go and what year was it?
So where did you go on your first date and what year was it? Okay. Our first date was dinner and a movie. Yeah, I know. Wait till you hear Olive Garden.
[4:10] Classy. And Rush Hour 3. Mm-hmm. Dates us a little bit. And that was back in 2001. 2001. Nice. So how old were you guys on that first date?

Toby was 16. I was 18. Okay. I think she was actually 19.
I'm just saying. No. She was actually, I think. It was close. All right. He will do this all night. So get ready. He'll, my age gap will get bigger and bigger.
So just, it's two years, folks. It's two years. I don't know if it's relevant, but I was born in 2001. Okay. Just hurtful. Just hurtful.
Our first date was at the Sonic. And I knew I had a really big spender when we went to the Sonic. And it was December 10th, 1971.

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[5:09] Really long time ago. Got the date and everything. Nice. Everything. We were friends for a while before we started officially dating.

But our first time out was to church together. I know. So sweet. And Chili's after. Nice. Another big spender.
I know, right? Big spender. Yeah. Smart. That was January of 2021. Okay. All right. Very cool.
So one of the things that's difficult about starting today is kind of making the leap from just being friends to actually making it official. People there are calling it a hard launch where you just post on social media that you're dating.
So how did you guys kind of make the leap from just being friends to officially dating? And then what did that kind of look like for you guys? We can go first if you want.
[6:07] Go for it. Well, we, like I said, were friends for a long time. And we didn't like each other at first. Well, we liked each other as friends, but didn't have that romantic attraction toward each other.

And then we actually took a drive down here to Mustang from Stillwater where we were in college. And I came here. I met his parents. We were still just friends.
No interest in dating. And his dad, you might know him, Michael Staten, asked me if I could rake leaves for him. And so I raked leaves for Michael that day.
And then we went out to eat at Toledo's, which was in its old location at the time. And, again, still just friends with this guy. And I'm just eating with his parents and him. Very awkward for me.
Oh, it was just the two of you guys? Just us. Wow. And Michael and Marcy. Okay. A little weird, but that's okay. Love them now. And then, honestly, after that day, we started to like each other.
[7:05] And then after some long talks and just seeing what we were looking for in the future, we started dating. Nice. Nice. We just kind of knew who each other were.

And somebody set us up for a date. And so after that, it was date, date, date. So we just started dating. I remember, like, we just, we went to Falls Creek.
Yeah. Yeah. I was 12. No, I'm just joking. I was, so, yeah, we went to Falls Creek. And we just started kind of hanging out and talking a lot.
And I remember being, literally because I was younger and she was in college, I felt really, when this happened, you were. We were there. We were there. So you were.
You really were. August 23rd. I remember the date. Boom. There it was. And I remember being like, I think I was supposed to, like, ask you out, like, to be my girlfriend. And, like, when that comes out of your mouth, it's really kind of weird and awkward and not cool.
[8:09] And I remember asking, like, I think, would you be my girlfriend? And I remember asking that. And she was like, sure. And so it was like the super official date. It was like August 23rd. We started dating.

That's how we started dating. That was a long way to get there. But that's how we started. Okay. I like it. I like it. So how has going on dates changed for you guys? So what did you guys do typically on a date when you were dating versus now if you get kind of a night out?
What does that look like for you guys? We go somewhere that's really kind of cheap. Then and now.
We like the middle ground of dates, which is, like, not McDonald's but then not, like, mahogany. Somewhere in the middle there. So Panda Express-ish level.
It's quality food, but you can – it doesn't break the bank. And I think we would go on a date then and now. Okay. I'm done. But when we first started dating, I was out at Southwestern, and he was back home.
[9:12] So we were an hour and a half away from each other. And I played basketball, so it's not like I got to go home a lot. And so when I did get to go home, I also had family to see.

And so I feel like there were times that we would hang out with my family because, obviously, I wanted to see them because I was out at school. But then we would go – like, we would go out. Like you said, we're pretty cheap dates. But, I mean, we like to eat good food, and it doesn't matter how – you know. If we can afford it, we're there for it. So that hasn't changed much in all the years.
Okay. Well, quite like Toby and you guys, if we go on a date, it's – a restaurant, mid-priced.
Every now and then we splurge, like anniversaries and things like that. But anyway, that's – we just – I can cook better than I can afford to eat.
[10:18] Okay. So anyway, she can really cook. But anyway, that's – we enjoy a date out, kind of like the old days. What else?

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We like to go to really expensive restaurants. No, we're still going to Chili's, just like the first date. But now we just have to drop off a kid before we go there.
Yeah. Pretty much the same. Nice. What do you get at Chili's? What's your order? I'll always ask her if she wants to do the triple dipper or go separate. And if we go separate – well, last time I got hot wings.
But sometimes I'll get a burger. Okay. All right. Chili's is a fine dining establishment. Not quite as good as Chick-fil-A, but that's okay. So you guys have started dating now.
How did you – one of the other difficulties of dating is trying to figure out how do I – how will I know if this is like the one that I want to marry or I'm supposed to marry? So there can be some anxiety over that.
[11:19] So how did you guys, whether it was an event or a moment, how did you guys figure out, you know, Toby's the guy I want to marry or, you know, this is the girl I want to marry? What did that look like for you guys?

Thanks. I generally had – my mom had told me at a really early age, she's like, you know, you need to – you really need to pray for the wife that you're going to have someday.
And when she told me that, I thought, okay, and as I started going along, I really would try to pray on a regular basis for my wife someday.
And I remember honestly just being like not even trying to make a joke about it, but I do remember like godly qualities that I was praying for. And I remember thinking other things that I just thought were important that I knew that would be somebody that I would enjoy to be married to.
And so I prayed and prayed and prayed, and I'm not trying to be cheesy here, but like when I met Sarah, everything I had prayed for, generally I thought like this is the person that I really believe I've been praying for.
[12:25] And I'm not saying that was like a – I looked across the room and the seas parted, and like I was like there she is. But that was – as I got to know her, that was it. That's good. Well, and similar, I mean I remember a class assignment one time.

It was listing out like – it's right – like characteristics of your future spouse. And so like I remember thinking through those things. And so similar, like Toby had all those qualities that I was looking for and praying for.
And at the end of the day, he was a believer. He was faithful in his church. And we genuinely love spending time with one another.
So it's not like – I feel like sometimes it's made out to be this like light bulb, you know, romantic comedy kind of moment. But, you know, when you are looking biblically what you're looking for in a spouse and what a spouse is supposed to be, and on top of that, praying for those qualities that complement you and that – and a person that you generally enjoy being around, when those things come together, it makes sense.
You know, not to make it less romantic or anything, but it all just kind of clicks together. Very good. Hey, guys, you just know.
[13:53] Right, guys? You'll know one of these days. Hey, I'm a butcher at the United in this little town we grew up in. And she lived way out in the country where she could have done better.

Some guys would have gone a little further out to get her. She used to come in the store on Saturday. I mean, she's in high school. I'm in college, working weekends. I mean, holidays, summers.
She'd come in the store with her mother. And she was so pretty. Hair down to her belt. Barefoot. I'm kidding you.
I mean, how many girls go shopping with their mother, grocery shopping? I mean, she was – I did my homework.
I mean, in the newspaper, she had won the Betty Crocker Homemaker of the Year Award. And I'm going, yeah, check that. And who's who in her high school?
[14:56] I mean, she was most mannerly. And she was. She was a really nice girl. Anyway, back to that – she'd come to the butcher shop.

And if the crops were good, I'd slice ham for them. If it wasn't so good, I'd be slicing bologna for her. But anyway, we would just – I would flirt with her and talk to her.
And I finally got up a nerve. And I was like, hey, when I get off, would you like to go get a Coke at the Sonic? Nothing else opened that late at night, okay? So anyway, we went out, and this is the

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one.
She's the one, okay? So anyway, it grew from there. She was Christian, just perfect in every way. What else? She was great. I think I just prayed about it a lot and got to know him more and more and looked again at all the godly characters that I was looking for in a mate and knew that this was a man that would always cherish me, and I really appreciated that.
[16:19] And so it was easy to say, I do, when he finally proposed. Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, kind of echoing what they all said, but really, it just lines up by the Lord's providence.

Like, you can't explain it. It just happens. Our timing was perfect with dating, and our personalities meshed well. If I would have met him in high school, I think I would have gotten the ick because I don't know if – I mean, Joey knew him in high school, but he also says he probably wouldn't have liked me in high school either.
So it really was just, like, the Lord, like, using our timings and our situation to bring us together, and we just knew. Like, you just can't explain it, but you just kind of knew, and we were both believers, which is very important.
So keep that in mind. But I want to hear what you have to say. How did you know I was the one? Yeah. Yeah, nothing too profound.
Like she said, we were close friends before we ever started dating, so we knew each other really well. So I knew I liked her as, you know, a person, as a friend.
[17:30] And then, you know, but yeah, we just – we talked one night about dating, and I kind of said, like, hey, you know, I'm in college now.

I don't want to date anyone unless I can see myself marrying this person. And she was like, oh, I kind of think the same way. I was like, all right, let's date. Then we got married.
But, yeah, it was just through long conversation and prayer and kind of knowing what you're looking for, yeah, it just kind of happened. All right. Thank you guys for sharing.
A very common reality in dating is breaking up. Obviously, you guys successfully made it through. You're married. But was there ever a time that you almost broke up? So any stories you'd like to share about almost breaking up?
No. No. Bubbles, did you ever almost break up? We don't like a lot of drama. We never did break up. All right. That's great.
[18:32] Very cool. All right. So tell us about your proposal. So how did – guy or girl can share. What was the plan? How did it actually go? Just tell us anything about your proposal.

I'll start us off. So we were back for Christmas break from school, and Toby worked at Dillard's, which is why he knows how to dress so well.
So – but he was working, and we had plans to go to dinner and a movie or to do something. And what was weird was he worked in Norman. I live south.
I grew up south of Norman. And then his family is even further south than that. And so he's like, hey, I'm going to come and pick you up, and then we'll go down to my parents' house. I'll change clothes, and then we'll go back up to Norman for this date.
And I was like, you know what? I bet he's got this big plan. I'm going to go there. He's going to have this whole big proposal. So we get down there. No, there's no proposal there. And I was like, all right, that's cool.
[19:30] So at this point, I'm starving, and he's like sitting by me and like holding my hand and being real sweet. And I was like, no, it's real sweet, but your girl's hungry.

Let's go. So finally we get on the road, and we go to Olive Garden. We go to a movie, and then we come back to my parents. And so we were talking before he walked in, and he gets down on one knee and proposes.
And for a second, I was like, this is a little lackluster. But also I was excited. But then the thing that I missed because I'm clueless sometimes was the whole reason we went down to his parents' house is that he had rearranged the furniture to be like it was where we first held hands.
That's why he was trying to hold my hand. And we went on our first date, Olive Garden in a movie, and then he proposed where he first said I love you. So I know, right? Right.
But he had to explain it all because I was clueless, and I missed it all. But it is one of my favorite stories, and it was very thoughtful. So I said yes, and the rest is history. Well done, Toby.
[20:37] That was good. That was good. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. As usual, after work, we had been dating a year.

I mean, you don't ever surprise anybody. I mean, there were some discussions over the course of the year about what the future would look like if we were to marry.
Anyway, yeah, after work, it's Christmas. We've been dating a year. By now, she's in college, too. And I was a junior.
She was a freshman. We had been out on a date after work. Yeah, probably to the Sonic. That's all the way open at Frederick at 9 o'clock at night.
So anyway, it was Christmas. I gave her her Christmas present. Her parents were going to get her some cowboy boots, and I gave her some western pants.
[22:02] Anyway, she was really impressed with that, you know. I said, well, you'll have to check the pockets. Anyway, the ring's in the pocket, and I proposed.

And she said, yeah. And so, there you go. That was a long time ago. That's how you did it back in the early 70s.
Okay. So, the ring was a little bit better than the pair of jeans he gave me for Christmas. Yeah, for us, we've been dating, I think, about a year and a half.
But so, I was here in Mustang. It was the summer, and Mary was up in Stillwater, I guess, working. And so, we were going to go down to Texas to visit her family on a weekend.
And so, she was working, and the plan was she was going to drive down and then pick me up, and we were going to go on a kind of nice dinner at a Bricktown Brewery, downtown OKC.
[23:14] And then I had a plan. But that day, she had a truck, a 97 or 98 red truck, that something, a belt broke on it, and she wasn't able to drive down.

So, like, I bought a ring. I've had it for a month. I have this whole thing planned. I have someone take pictures of us when we go down. And she was texting me saying that she can't come down because her truck's broken.
And so, I'm at my parents' house like, oh, my gosh, what do I do? And I'm, like, talking to my parents. And so, my grandpa, my grandparents live about an hour, a little less, from Stillwater.
And so, my mom called my grandpa, I think, and said, like, hey, can you go fix her truck? And so, he drove down. And so, now he's fixing her truck and got a new belt or something, fixed it, and then she started driving.
So, I was, like, really relieved. Okay, plan's still on. So, then she comes and gets me. I'm dressed pretty nice. I got a dress shirt on. And so, then we go to Bricktown Brewery and eat.
[24:19] And I had told our photographer, like, hey, we're going to be at this spot. We'll probably eat for about an hour. And, man, I took, like, two bites of my burger. And I was so nervous I couldn't eat anymore.

And so, we were probably eating for 25, 30 minutes. And so, I'm texting her, like, we're leaving right now. And so, I told her, let's go to the Scissortail Bridge. Because I think my brother had just put on a padlock with a girlfriend on the bridge.
And so, that's something you do. And so, I said, let's do that. So, we went to the bridge. And when Mary went to put on the padlock, she turned around and I was down on one knee. And she said yes.
Nice. Nice. Nice. Nice. Nice. Nice. All right. So, a little bit quickly, how long were you engaged? And then, how old were you when you got married? So, about how long was your engagement? And what age were you guys on the wedding day? Our engagement was just under a year.
[25:21] And I was 21. And he was 23. Is that right? I was 19.

We grew up fast in those days. And Steve was 21. And we just matured. And we were earlier. And we were engaged for six months.
We were engaged from December to August. We were going to get married earlier. But it was like the summer of weddings at his church, which was bigger than mine. So, we had to push it back to August.
He was 20 and I was 22. You said 24? I said 22. 22. So, these days, I looked it up today.
The average age for first marriage of a guy is 30. This is just not necessarily believers, but just everyone. First, the age of first marriage for a woman is on average 28.
[26:25] So, that is much higher than what you guys got married. I think it's much higher than what's typical among Christian circles. I'm a big fan of young marriage, which we have up here.

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Lacey and I were 21 when we got married. So, in a culture that's kind of prioritizing education or career before marriage, what would you say to these students to encourage them to pursue marriage kind of as the entrance to adulthood rather than something that you do once you've figured out how to be an adult?
I don't know. I think a lot of folks don't really see the kind of sweetness of what marriage is. I think there's a lot of people that are, you mentioned some of these things, trying to chase things and want to experience all these other things before they get married.
I don't know. I just, I personally feel like I would not have changed anything being married at 20 and 22 because we were able to really just, I mean, I feel like just have a longer marriage and start to enjoy marriage at an earlier age.
And really, I hate to say grow up together, but when you're 20 and 22, you really are not that old and you have, you're still in college, you're still just getting your first jobs and things.
[27:42] And so, I don't know. I just think we, the value of marriage is people don't really see the, see it for probably as beautiful as it is and as a gift from God as it is is probably my biggest thing to say.

Well, and there's a sweetness about, you know, growing up together, your first jobs and things like that. Like, you get to experience together. Like, you have someone who's by your side walking through those super high points of your life and then even those low moments of your life.
Like, you have someone who's by your side walking along that with you. And there's just a real sweetness about that. And I think because they don't value what marriage brings, they don't see that as an added benefit when you marry young.
And you get to experience those things together. I think age is more about how, you know, it comes from the wisdom of the Bible of when we should get married.
And biblical wisdom, not the world's thought processes, the pattern of the world's thought processes. Because the world will tell you, have fun because your life is over when you're married.
[28:55] That's absolutely not true. Travel, pursue your careers, whatever, and then get married. And that's not God's plan.

God's plan is for two people to unite and create a family. And we were, we got married in Frederick, Oklahoma.
And we moved immediately to Birmingham, Alabama, where we knew absolutely no one. And it cemented, we were young and stupid and made a lot of mistakes. But it cemented us young and growing, growing together.
It was really good for us. If you have found the one, don't wait till you're 30.
Marriage is God's design. I'll agree our generation married earlier than the current generation.
[30:03] And I don't know why. I know you think you can't afford it. You know you think you gotta, you do want to get your education.

You want to finish that. But don't, if you have found the one, don't wait. Don't wait. But I do believe we have to be mature enough for marriage.
We have to have some maturity, which doesn't come overnight. It's not a, it's not a study for this exam, and I'll, I'll just ace it. It takes, it takes some time and growth and biblical growth in, in Christian growth and walking with God before we're, we're ready for that.
Yeah. I think that's helpful if I can just jump in. So if you find yourself unmarried at 21, just because you start dating someone at 21 doesn't mean you have to get married to them. Okay. So I think that's really, really good wisdom.
Yeah, I think, I think definitely the world and movies and TV kind of portray the idea that when you get married, your life's over and now your wife is calling all the shots.
[31:16] And, you know, this is from a man's perspective on TV. Like, now you can't do anything you want, can't hang out with friends because your wife needs you to do this. And I think that's unfortunately how a lot of marriages can be and can be viewed.

But it's just a completely different idea of marriage for the Christian. And, yeah, you know, a lot of people today will say, you know, you, you want to go travel and have fun with your friends while you're young, do all these things.
But it's so fun to do stuff with your wife or, you know, with your husband. But I love hanging out every day with Mary and getting to do fun things with her.

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And I would hate to be doing stuff by myself or with my dumb friends, you know. So I think it's just a different view of marriage sometimes from the world versus a Christian.
Plus, you get to start having babies earlier if you get married younger. So that's awesome. That's true. Good point. Yeah, I think I appreciate what you guys pointed out, that we as Christians have a different perspective on marriage because we believe the Bible and want to hold to what it teaches.
[32:30] And marriage is such an important way that we point to the gospel. That's what Paul says marriage is intended for. And so I think we as Christians should live with putting by putting the gospel on display.

And marriage is a beautiful way to do that. It's a God intended way that we can do that just in everyday life. So if you think back to your teenage years, you've been in in their seats.
You've been a teenager that's either dating or doesn't have anyone, but certainly not married. What can they do now to prepare themselves for marriage in the future, maybe next five or 10 years?
So maybe what advice would you give yourself in their shoes or what general counsel would you give to them to prepare for marriage well? I'll just say I recently read a book about spiritual disciplines and there is the discipline of singleness.
And it was a really good chapter. And then the next chapter was the discipline of marriage. One thing she pointed out in the book was that marriage isn't life's goal.
[33:33] It's not your ultimate goal in life. Your goal is to live for the Lord. It's your holiness, your sanctification. So focus on that and work on being more godly and honestly being the Christian you would want to marry.

Because when I was first friends with Benjamin, I was not the Christian that I would have wanted to marry. And I think vice versa too. And you do grow as you get married.
But definitely just live for the Lord today. Serve him. Serve his people. Have fun. You know. To God's glory. But that's like the biggest thing that I think that I would say to you guys is grow in sanctification.
Of course be saved if you're not. Call upon the name of the Lord and repent. But grow closer to the Lord. Yeah.
And also I would say that you don't have to marry someone just because you're dating and you graduated college or whatever stage. Make sure that you're not following that timeline but you're following, you know, like kind of all of us have said up here.
[34:47] You're praying about it. You're talking about it. You're looking for these godly qualities in this person. Make sure all of that is set and it's not just, well, I just graduated and I've been dating for a year.

I guess we'll get married now. It definitely needs to be something intentional or it will be a rocky marriage. If you were to sit down and make a list of all the godly, of all the traits that you want in a mate, and think about that.
And I'm not talking about I want a hot mate. I'm talking about I want a godly, somebody who has godly character, who has the fruits of the spirit, who is loving and kind and tolerant and patient and joyful and faithful to God.
And you look at that list you're making of what you want in a mate and then you decide I'm going to be this kind of person. You make yourself that kind of person because you will be that kind of person.
You will attract that kind of person for a mate. The other thing I would say is don't be anxious about this. God is sovereign in all of our lives and he is a good God and he will take care of it if you continue to see God in all your ways.
[36:12] Exactly. Seek the Lord. Be that if you're a man, be that man that someone would want to marry.

If you're a young lady, be that young lady. Some godly man would want to marry. It's every one of those previous comments are exactly right.
Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. But guys, you, your job is protector, provider.
You treat your girlfriends, soon to be wives, like they are precious because they are.
And likewise, ladies, you be the lady. You be the lady that God intends you to be. And the man will honor that, honor you, and treat you like you deserve to be treated, like a princess, like the special person you are.

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[37:46] Thank you. I'm probably just going to keep echoing the same things we've already talked about, but your personal walk with the Lord, obviously, is where all this would start.

And you kind of see how all the things we've mentioned all work together. And I would just think as you're walking in your faith and being faithful, you're praying for someone that is being faithful.
And I would say one of the things you're in your current stage as you go out of high school, so on and so forth, that if you're living a godly life, you are in a local church, you're in college, you're a part of different Christian organizations, you're going on mission trips, you're doing things that Christians and believers would do, hanging out with other fellow Christians and believers.
Not at the point to trying to find a boyfriend, girlfriend in those, but as you're living your faith out, you're also with other believers. And I think that's just an important thing, because if you are not doing those things as you go to college, as you leave, then you're putting yourself around people that are not believers, more than likely.
And that's who you're going to be hanging out with and spending most of your time with. And we do know undeniably that we should not be unequally yoked. And as we're with other believers on a regular basis, there's where people we tend to be rubbing shoulder with that we potentially someday could marry, I think is another point.
[39:12] That's good. So as you look across teenage dating or even young married life, are there any trends among daters or young married people that you find to be concerning that you'd give caution about?

Well, one trend is living together before you're married. Obviously, that's very ungodly and not God's will for our lives.
But also, the world will tell you, oh, live together before you're married because you'll be sure about who you're going to marry and you'll marry the right one. That is not true.
40%. It increases your risk of divorce by 40% if you live together before you're married. So if you want to death do us part Mary and you want to follow God, don't do that.
It's what the world is doing. Kind of along those lines, what could lead to that is a trend I see a lot is dating for too long.
[40:22] There are certain situations where maybe you're living apart, like you're doing distance and you're in school and you just have to wait for financial things and whatnot. But generally, you shouldn't be dating someone for eight years before you get married to them because that can lead to, oh, well, we're already dating for this long.

We might as well move in together. Or you just start dating like you're married, which is another trend. That's not good. Dating like you're married. But I would just encourage you guys not to date for too long if you don't have to.
That's good. Any others? We had talked about the trend of which I know texting is such a huge thing. But so much gets lost in translation when your whole relationship is wrapped up in communicating through text.
There's something to be said about having real conversations. We were fortunate to like texting wasn't a big thing. So we talked on the phone a lot because we did long distance for two years. And so we had real conversations about all sorts of things. And it wasn't just boiled down to just words on a screen. And so really taking the time to have actual conversations with the people that you're dating.
[41:42] And it's not all just via your cell phone. And then also just kind of to go with the dating like you're married. The idea of you're dating and so you abandon all other relationships in your life.

So like you're, it's just you and that person you're dating and you've dropped all other friendships and things like that. I don't feel like that's healthy. So that would be a trend that I would probably steer away from.
Well, the Bible speaks very frequently to the blessings and joys of marriage. Proverbs 18.22 says, He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.
And so there are a multitude of joys that come with marriage. But what would you say just personally you're most thankful for, your highest joy of marriage is? I personally just think just you're, when you really think about the providence of God and how you're brought together with the person you're married to.
That just brings such great joy when along the way it's just been a, I feel like our marriage of 20 years has been nothing but just a blessing. I, every single day, just enjoy any moment I get to spend

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with Sarah.
[43:03] If we're ourselves, with our kids, with our families, it doesn't matter. Just the joy is just being together and just thinking about God's blessing in that providence as we come together in marriage.

My favorite thing is, I mean, aside from the blessing of having a husband who is so intentional and leading our family well and being faithful to the Lord and the way that he leads our family, that is such a joy.
But, like, looking at just our relationship, like, I thoroughly enjoy hanging out with Toby. I mean, we can hang out at home. We can go look at grocery stores.
We can, like, we just have such a good time together. He makes me laugh. And it's just one of the greatest joys of my life because I just, I love spending time with him. And I get to spend time with him every single day.
So. He makes me laugh, too. I know. Marriage is just, well, it's God's design.
[44:07] It's the life partner. It's doing life together. I mean, over 50 years for us. Have there been rough times?

You bet. Have there been good times? Of course. But it's life together. In sickness and health.
I mean, we've seen each other through sickness. We've seen each other through good times. You know, we've raised kids. Nothing like it.
That's, it's just nothing like doing life together with somebody you love. It's God's design. And you serve faithfully in a church.
We've, anywhere we've lived, and we've lived all over the place. We, in my work, moved us a lot. But everywhere we moved, within a week or two, we were in a, we were plugged into a church.
[45:12] I mean, I taught. I married taught. I mean, we, it's just doing life together. And you'll want to pick the right one.

Pick the one God shows you. Okay. Okay. Okay. I like marriage because he makes me coffee every morning. And I think he does that, so I won't be grouchy.
But that's kind of, that's an example of what kind of servant leader I married. And he serves us very, very well. He's always serving me in our family.
And so we, we have grown together in the companionship of loving each other and serving each other. On two sides, it's really great because, like they're saying, we love hanging out with each other and making each other laugh and just doing things together every day.
That's really fun to just have a best friend. But also on the more, you know, spiritual side, it's great to have somebody that lives with you every day who you're close to that can encourage you and push you to grow in your faith.
[46:30] And, you know, there's, it's always great, you know, because there's times where maybe I'm complaining about something to marry. And then she'll, you know, she doesn't always just agree with every single thing I say, unless I'm right.

But she'll, she'll, you know, kind of come back with, with some truth and kind of help me in that moment. And, you know, it's really great to just have somebody like that that can help grow me and that, that I can help do that with too.
And we're both growing together. Marriage is seriously just so awesome. And I don't even know how to explain it if you're not married. But it's crazy how I'm able to live with someone and do life with someone who's like my best friend.
And I feel like I'm going to get emotional because, well, I'm pregnant. So I'll just blame it on that. But seriously, like I get to wake up with him every day and go to bed with him every day. And like I just can't, you just can't even imagine it.
It is such a great joy. And I know I said earlier that, you know, marriage isn't the ultimate goal. But I do highly recommend it. If the Lord has you in that path, then get married because it's amazing.
[47:46] Amen. Well, thank you guys so much for being here this evening and for sharing wisdom with us. You guys are great examples of marriage and godliness and friendliness to me. And I hope our students look up to you as well as models to imitate in terms of marriage and dating.

So could you guys thank them for being here tonight? Thank you.

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