

Paul H. Dixon: Thank you, Glen. I'd like to commend our forensic team as well for their accomplishments. We're grateful for our young people and what they're doing in so many various areas.

This is going to be an exciting week for us here on the campus of Cedarville College. We begin our in forum with Henry Morris and Duane Gish and tomorrow, this is put together by our student senate and we're thankful for all the work that they've put into this. On Wednesday, Channel 7 will be here to televise some of the things and perhaps part of the chapel service as well. They want to do something upon the creation research study and all of this that'll be taking place in our campus. They also are going to stay and do a special on Cedarville College, something that they're going to be having on their newscast, and so quite a bit of filming and interviewing and so on that will be taking place. And we're grateful for this.

I also want to make a special announcement for Gamma Kai and they say, get in the swing of spring. Go up, up and away with Gamma Kai and around the world in 80 days. For a break from your studies, circle April 11 as your departure date for an exciting trip around the world. Lift off time will be 6:00 PM. Our gigantic balloon is big enough for all faculty, staff and students who are not afraid of heights. Entertainment will be provided by the group First Love and John de Lancie. The dress for the banquet will be semi-formal. This will be the contract meal for the evening. Tickets will be available today through Wednesday from 11:00 to 1:00 and 4:30 to 6:30. Guests and off contract students will be \$6.50. So get your passports and come join us for a fun evening. We trust we'll have great support and participation by our college family for this and for Gamma Kai.

We had an exciting day yesterday. I don't know about you, where you were and what God did in your midst, but I was invited by Pastor Burnham, Dave Burnham. Many of you recall when he spoke in chapel last year to speak at the Chapel of University Park there in Akron. In fact, even some of our students came to the service and some parents were there, some not only from that church but from other churches. They have an auditorium that seats 2500, and we filled it two times, yesterday morning at 9:00 and then at 11:00 and a fine crowd last night. And it's thrilling to see what God is doing there through that ministry. They have 150 bible studies in homes, taking place throughout the city of Akron throughout the course of the week. Great vision, bible-teaching a solid ministry and it was a joy to be a part of it. And just to see God work.

We had a number of people respond publicly to the invitation. They give their invitation in a unique way. They have everyone remain seated and then the choir starts to sing and those who want to respond just get up and come. And a number came in all the services. But after the service, a man said, "Could I see you?" And I said, "Yes." And he just started and he just started weeping. I would suppose the man in his mid-40s. He said, "Let's get away from here."

And so we walked away and he said, "They've been praying for me in this church for eight years. I was unsaved." And he said, "I work at the racetrack." And he said, "My wife told me, you have to go tonight. You have to be in that service. I want you to hear what this man has to say." And so he said, "I came." He said, "I just want you to know I got saved while you were preaching tonight in the service." And he said, "I can't wait for Pastor Burnham to get back." He said, "He's witnessed to me and talked to me and prayed for me for eight years and now I've received the Lord."

And I don't know about you, but I just think it's a thrill to be a part of this great work and this great ministry and the sowing and the watering process when God gives the increase just to be in on it and see what he does. We want to continue this morning a series that we started relative to the Cedarville College student and his family. And we have spent a number of sessions together on getting ready for marriage, and talking about its importance and the biblical principles of what is marriage, and some principles on dating, some warnings relative to building our relationships on biblical principles and certainly not on lust.

And then we started in our last session together on the number one principle for deciding if this is number one for me, if this is the one God would have to be my mate. And we decided that that number one principle is very simply the word maturity. We talked about how we need to be spiritually mature. In fact, I gave you some things to write down. I gave you a list that was taken in a national survey. No doubt you many of you still have that list. And then I told you that I would tell you how the national survey responded. We talked about the various, I think the way the list that we gave you had to do with altruism, and emotional wellbeing, and honesty, and knowledge, and love, and loyalty, morality, physical appearance, religious faith, and wealth. Surprisingly enough, the number one value that people placed that they wanted to have in their mate from the national survey of people was religious faith.

The number two was love. Three was morality, four was honesty, five was emotional wellbeing, six was loyalty, seven was the concern or interest in others, eight was knowledge, nine was physical appearance, and ten was wealth. And I think that's very interesting that probably basically the majority of these people being unbelievers said that money was that the bottom of the list and next to the bottom was physical appearance. And yet somehow the way we function, that's where we put our priorities. We look at that and that's the biggest thing.

Now, I certainly think as believers we would look at it much differently even in the entire list, but the important thing is that we realize that maturity is so very, very important. We talked about spiritual maturity last time, the relationship to the word of God. How does your future mate treat the word? What is his or her devotional life like? Scripture memorization, are they a reader? They read about the Bible. Do they obviously have a concern for integrating biblical principles into their thought life? What about into their lifestyle, into their behavior?

What's their attitude toward chapel and the local church? Can they be instructed by others? Are they good listeners? We talked about the standard of biblical principles, and having some convictions, and even the importance of making a distinction between biblical mandates and personal preferences. Do they have a concern for the lost, an interest in Christian service, a desire for the will of God, not only in their vocation but in everything that they do. A heart for missions, financial support of the Lord's work.

We talked about even some of our graduates and the way that they support their local church. Do they enjoy being around mature Christians privately? You can tell a lot about your future mates' friends. Friends, so important. When God gives you a family and you have children, I think you will say that one of the things you'll be most concerned about will be the friends they will choose. And that certainly should be a priority for you as you look at that individual right now. What are their friends like?

Today I'd like to begin talking about emotional maturity and I recognize again that it is impossible to separate emotional wellbeing from spiritual wellbeing, but I've simply divided into these two main categories so that you can have a different heading and perhaps zero in and look at it in a little different fashion. The first thing I have listed under emotional maturity is a question, how do they handle temper? Jealousy? All of this demonstrates insecurity. If you have someone you're dating and they tend to be very jealous, I can tell you right off the top that this is a very insecure person. And that will manifest itself in many other areas.

Do they fly off the handle? Not necessarily at you, but perhaps others or things that happen in their lives? Sometimes I think that we have the idea that wife beating that takes place apart from Christianity. No, no. We have people in our churches, men who mistreat their wives. And I will guarantee you that it goes back to an insecurity and not knowing how to handle temper. I'll not give you passages or verses for the things this morning, but at least for some and then you can continue your study and select some texts that would support some of these other areas.

But let's do look at what the word of God has to say in proverbs about the matter of temper. The 14th chapter, verse 17 says, He that is soon angry dealeth and a man of wicked devices is hated. You give some meditation to that. If you have someone you're dating and they fly off the handle and get angry in a hurry, he that is soon angry dealeth foolishly with the matter at hand and with the line of subjects. Verse 29, he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth folly.

Number two, are they self-centered and proud? Go to chapter 16 of Proverbs. Let's underline some verses. Verse five, everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. 18 verse 18, chapter 16, pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit

before a fall. Verse 19, better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.

You may enjoy being around the proud person, a haughty person. They may come across to you. You may be insecure yourself. And that guy is so haughty in his intellectual pride or in his spiritual pride or whatever it might be, and that gives you a sense of security. You say, oh, I like to spend my life with that person. And then you take those vows and you do spend your life with that person and you find out that you would've been better to have listened to the writer of Proverbs when it is better to be of a humble spirit with a lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.

I will assure you that you will be in for some exceedingly rough times if you decide to link your life with a very proud person. Number three. Basically a critical negative person or a positive person. I was again impressed as I went into Dave Burnham's church with the spirit of that church and Don Allen, who flies me around a great deal and is so gracious, went over there with me, said, "This church is so friendly." He said, "I'm just amazed the places I go with you and the spirit of the churches and the friendliness of the churches."

And I said, "Yes, Don, did you ever notice? Those are basically positive churches. These are churches that have vision. These are churches that do not spend all of their time upon the negative, but they have a vision for their community and for ministering the word of God." And the same thing that is true of a corporate level, that is true at a church level, that is true at a college level, has to be true in your family. And if you are dating someone and they are just geared to the negative, if you decide to marry that person, you're going to have a home and a life that's going to be filled with the negative. And you're going to either become a critic yourself and both of you be critics or you're just going to be miserable.

Philippians chapter 4, [inaudible] tells us how we are supposed to think. We're supposed to think upon those things that are honest and just and true. And if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things and what you think is what you are. And certainly we recognize that an academic institution like this, there is a place for critical thinking, where we take what we hear and we measure it up against truth and against God's word.

But when you just spend all of your time seeing what the negative is in people or in things or in institutions, then I assure you that you grieve the spirit of God. And if you build your family upon that, you're not only going to have problems in husbands and wives, but you're going to have some super problems with your kids. In fact, some of you right now know that you have problems, spirit and emotionally because your home was a critical home. And probably some of the most secure young people we have at Cedarville College are those who come out of positive homes where there's a great spirit, where's a lot of fun in that family and there's just a joy to be a part of it.

Number four, do they have a sense of humor? You know, need a lot of humor in a family. That's the thing about, I always like to come back to our college family and we talk about some of the trials and the tribulations and the problems that we have, but if you can learn to laugh and you can learn at times that something that may be serious, even know how to bring it down a notch or two and not make it quite as serious, and to be able to even to twist it and bring in some levity and laugh together, it just lifts the whole gloom and puts in a totally different perspective.

And the same thing is true in your own family. When you come home and you're tired and perhaps both of you have been out working that day and there are pressures and all of a sudden you can bring some levity into the house. Not all of us necessarily, both mates are extremely witty. Sometimes one is wittier than the other, but hopefully at least there is one there who can add that. It'll make a great deal of difference in the family. So I would certainly want you to check it out and see if the person at least has a sense of humor.

On the other side of the coin, can that person cry? Number five, especially for you young ladies, as men, we like this to come across with this macho image and for years, at least in our part of the country and Ohio is my home. I was born in Cincinnati and I don't know why, maybe it's not true across the nation, but in our part of the country to our generation, to my generation, it was communicated that if you're a real man, you never cry.

Two things I heard men say, who had a great impact upon my life, they would look at me and they would say, number one, I never apologized to anybody. I'm a man. Number two, I never cry. That's unfortunate, especially for a Christian, because a Christian man and a Christian woman should know what it is to apologize because there are certainly times when we need to. And secondly, there are times when we need to cry.

And men, one of the greatest things that can happen in your house is for your wife from time to time to see that you have some heart and to see you weep. And I'll assure you, it will do much for your children if your children see that you're able to weep as a father. Can they cry? That speaks to emotional wellbeing. Number six, are they moody? Oh, you say, wow, we start applying that there won't be anyone left.

That's true, because we are emotional beings and all of us from time to time find ourselves being moody. Now, there are some who are moodier than others. I realize that, and I might just say this, for our moody, especially moody friends who are with us, and this is not a plug this morning for Moody Bible Institute, but for our moody friends who are here, some of the deepest people in the cause of Christ are moody people. Some of the rest of us who may not be very moody, sometimes we live on the surface a lot more.

But I would say that especially if you are a person who doesn't tend to be very moody and you're the person you're considering marrying is just always moody, right now you may not look at that very seriously, but I assure you it can be a severe problem in your family. And perhaps you can help that individual. Perhaps you can give them a better perspective upon the word of God and upon the Christian life and the kind of God that they have and the events that come into the life. But I at least would encourage you to weight that. Are they moody in a serious way, in an out of balanced way?

Number seven, are they forgiving? Do they hold grudges? Do they have good forgetters? You'd be surprised how many people are married. One day the guy blows it and she says, "I'll never forget that," and she doesn't. She brings that up for the next 10 years. Every time they have a problem, remember what you did, and all guys are just as guilty. Sometimes they may not say it, but they take it and they plant it into their inner being and they say, someday I will get back at her. There will be the opportunity. And then they unload. Oh, no.

I had a pastor who led me to Christ, Mitch Seidler, who pastored the Norwood Baptist in Cincinnati for about 17 years, and he went through some of the most difficult problems that you could ever experience in a local church. I mean, it was a bad scene. It wasn't just a split. There were just terrible things that took place against him personally. And one day I was there with him for an evangelistic campaign. He is not there any longer, but I said something to Pastor Seidler about, oh, something had happened. He said, "Paul, I don't even remember that." He said, "During all of the trials, I asked God to help me to forget it." And he said, "God's given me a good forgetter." Oh, I like that.

I think we all need to pray for that. God give us good forgetters. Ephesians 4:32, I'll quote it. You can write it down and some may want to turn, but most of you have memorized it anyway. And be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. And may I suggest that that principle applies in the family. Don't take biblical principles and apply them to the great body, to the local church, the relationships with roommates and to other classmates and fail to apply it in the most important arena, the arena of the home. But so many Christians do that. We need to be able to forgive. And if you are dating someone who doesn't forgive and who obviously holds grudges, I would seriously reconsider my relationship.

Eight, are they thoughtful, kind and considerate? I go back to Ephesians chapter four, verse 32. Young lady, is he a gentleman? Is he considerate of you? Is he kind? I will assure you, if you are not dating a thoughtful young man right now, he definitely will not be thoughtful, kind or considerate when you marry him. The odds are that generally he will be less than he is now and she will be less as well. It's not just a matter we think about men and the responsibility that we have of being gentlemen, the young ladies must manifest to the young men a spirit of kindness and graciousness and consideration also. Weigh that seriously. Ephesians 4:32 again.

The next one is, are they willing to leave their families? You remember what we studied back in the book of Genesis, that the man was to cleave unto his wife. They were to be one flesh. They were to leave the father and the mother. I thought Chuck Swindoll had an excellent suggestion. He says that in all of his married ceremonies, he has the parents to stand and take a vow that they are freeing their child to that marriage relationship. It's part of the ceremony, but it's not just a matter of parents being willing to let go of their kids, but are the kids willing to let go of the parents?

I also have a firm conviction that for those of us who are parents, and you will become parents, that we try to build into our young people a sense of independence, where they know that the parent loves them and respects them, and yet somehow they are also able to move out into the arena of life. And the parent that is not willing to let go is doing that child a great disservice and perhaps we'll be doing that future marriage relationship a great disservice. But I remember I had one question to come in, and your questions are encouraged again, either to put them in the box or to send them to me through the mail. We try to blend in as many as possible, can't get them till tomorrow. But let me say this, some of you are asking the kind of questions that I can't deal with in chapel and if you would like to come and see me personally, please do so.

If my schedule won't allow it that day and it's pressing, I can recommend some others to talk to you. But we do encourage your question, but someone said, should I? How do I find out what her relationship or his relationship would be to parents? Well, I think it's good to make a visit to the home. I think it's good to plan a trip, to go back and to spend a few days there. You're not going to be able to tell everything, but if you're observant at all, you'll be able to sense something of that relationship. I also think that you will know something just by being around them, but I would encourage you to watch this. Are they willing to leave mom and dad?

Next, do they demonstrate that they trust you? It's an amazing thing to me is that many men are not willing to let their wives spend time with other women. They are so protective and there are women who will not allow their husbands to spend time with other men. They begrudge them a bowling night. They begrudge them up a day of golf. He begrudges her a day and a half trip to the Springfield Mall. And hey, you know guys, I think we have to be careful.

We are opposed to the gay movement and the homosexual movement and all the rest. But I am hearing some fundamentalists almost communicate that if men enjoy being around each other, there's something wrong and women enjoy being around each other that's wrong. Well, I want you to know that I believe that it is healthy to allow your wife to get with other women and spend some time together and to allow your husband to get with guys and spend some time.

I think you can detect some of those attitudes even as you're around them. This of course must be done with consideration of the priority of the relationship to

the husband and wife. Some men spend all their time out with guys and they don't spend any time at home. And this is a serious problem and this is a sin against the wife. And the same thing is true of women. In fact, even as Pastor Gardner's pointed out, some women spend all their time at church and they have unsaved husbands, and they don't spend any time with their husbands, and they think they're doing a great service to the Lord, but they're not, and they're doing a great disservice to their husband and they'll not influence him for Christ.

The next one is, can they accept their own mistakes and do not blame others? Boy, I have a problem with that. Do you? It is so easy when we blow it to immediately start thinking of who caused that. Our whole psychological counseling system today seems to come back well, if I blew it must have been something that happened in my life five years ago that made me blow it. Or the circumstances were there that caused this to happen. No. We need to get good, healthy, mental, biblical attitudes that face up to our errors, to our mistakes, and to our sins, not place it on someone else. It's my fault because if that guy's blaming someone else, now young lady, he'll blame you after you get married. Young lady, all of us, young man, need to look at the person's attitude on where he fixes the blame.

Next, is he ready to accept responsibility of the home, of managing money, of looking after another person, and of the children that will come into that marriage? Bruce Larson, in his book Marriage is for Living, said and I quote, "So many marriages fail today because the partners are so immature, so selfish, so unschooled in real living that they cannot take spiritual responsibility for each other or for their children.

God in your life, listen to this. I think this is excellent. I'd never seen it put quite like this before. God in your life means maturity. Maturity is the basis for responsibility, willingness, and the capacity to take spiritual responsible responsibility for the other person are parts of the test of a thoughtful, happy, and unselfish marriage. I would like to close with the verse in Psalm 138 verse 8, because this can get a little frustrated. We begin drawing up this perfect image of this individual we want and we say, I don't know whether this can really ever happen. In Psalm 138 verse 8, the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, oh Lord, endureth forever. Forsake not the works of thine own hands. Isn't that beautiful?

The psalmist said, the Lord will perfect all those inadequacies in me. I am praying that he will not forsake me, the work of his own hands, his creation. And so I guess I would say this, yes, put these tests up, get serious about it, talk about it. And if there are some areas of weakness in that young lady or you see young lady and that young man, let's begin praying for them that the Lord will perfect that which is lacking not only in them, but also in me. And also let's begin conversing about it and trying to help each other. Let's not just throw in the towel on the relationship, but after endeavoring, as we pray and work at it

and talk it out, obviously they're not going to straighten some of these things out. They don't even recognize them as weaknesses. Then I think it's time to say, though difficult, it may be, "This is just not the person God wants me to have for the rest of my life."

Well, we're thankful for God and how he directs us. It's always a joy to share with you on these Monday mornings. Want you to have a good day and to have a good week. God bless you.