

## THE SECRET OF THE REIGNING LIFE OF JOSEPH

### *Special Fellowship*

#### **Keeping Ourselves for a Proper Marriage in God's Economy**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:17-19; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1-2; 1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 13:4; Matt. 24:37-38; Luke 17:28-29; 21:36; Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 6:9; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Jude 7; Rom. 1:24, 26-27, 32; Heb. 12:16; 1 John 2:1; 1:7, 9; 1 Cor. 6:11

#### **I. In the Lord's recovery today all the saints need a renewed mind so that they would not be fashioned according to this age, especially in the matter of marriage—Rom. 12:1-2:**

- A. The unbelievers live in the vanity of their minds, being darkened in their understanding because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart, and are past feeling, having no feeling in their conscience—Eph. 4:17-19:
  - 1. Being past feeling means not caring for one's conscience; instead of regarding his conscience, fallen man gave himself over to lasciviousness—v. 19.
  - 2. After man fell, God ordained that man should be under the ruling of his conscience; we should be full of feeling concerning our purity, even being a pattern in purity—1 Tim. 4:12.
- B. In the normal relationship between males and females in the church life, the governing principle is purity—1 Tim. 5:1-2; 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:22.
- C. In the church life contact between the sisters and the brothers is unavoidable; hence, to be protected from any defilement a proper relationship must be maintained in sanctification and honor—1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 13:4.

#### **II. The conditions of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the deluge and the generation of Lot before the destruction of Sodom portray the perilous condition of man's living before the Lord's coming and the great tribulation—Matt. 24:37-38; Luke 17:28-29:**

- O. In the days of Noah the people were befuddled by eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage—eating, drinking and marriage were originally ordained by God for man's existence; but due to man's lust, Satan utilizes these necessities of human life to occupy man and keep him from God's purpose—Matt. 24:37-38.
- P. In the days of Lot the people were stupefied by eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building—Luke 17:28-29; cf. Ezek. 16:49-50.
- Q. To participate in the overcomers' rapture that we may enjoy the Lord's parousia and escape the great tribulation, we must overcome the stupefying effect of man's living today—Luke 21:36.

#### **III. The principle of marriage is oneness: one husband for one wife—Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Thes. 4:3-4; Heb. 13:4:**

- A. Adam and Eve becoming one flesh, one complete unit, is a figure of God and man being joined as one; God created us not as complete men but as "male and female"—Gen. 2:18, 21-23; 5:2; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6.
- B. The Lord's word not only acknowledges God's creation of man but also confirms God's ordination regarding man's marriage, that is, that one male and one female are to be joined and yoked together as one flesh and are not to be separated by man—Matt. 19:4- 6.

- C. Concerning the matter of marriage, God has laid down definite guidelines on whom one can marry and whom one cannot marry; the Bible shows us clearly that the marriages of God's people should be restricted to those among themselves only—2 Cor. 6:14.
- D. We live in an age of Sodom; the whole world today is a Sodom; many men and women live together without being married; certainly this will bring in God's judgment—1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 6:9; Lev. 18:22; 20:13:
  1. Today people commit fornication like those at the time of Sodom; homosexuality is human fornication in its extreme; and those who engage in homosexuality commit fornication to the uttermost—Jude 7.
  2. In the Bible God exercised a special judgment over Sodom because the people there indulged in lust without any restriction—Gen. 19:1-29.
  3. Nothing offends God more than this indulgence; nevertheless, many young people today, even young women, have no sense of shame regarding this—Rom. 1:24-28, 32; Eph. 4:19.

**IV. Fornication means to violate God's governing and controlling principle, resulting in confusion—Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:18:**

- R. The apostle Paul strongly charged the newly converted Gentile believers to be sanctified unto God, to abstain from fornication, the most gross sin in the eyes of God, that they might avoid its damage and contamination—1 Thes. 4:3; Heb. 12:16.
- S. Nothing damages the saints and the church life more than fornication—1 Thes. 4:3; Heb. 13:4.
- T. To possess one's vessel is to keep it, to preserve it; to keep or preserve man's vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, is the safeguard against committing fornication—1 Thes. 4:3-4.
- U. Because we have been regenerated, our body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit; therefore, you must keep your body in an honorable way—Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:19.
- V. All the young people in the church life should exercise certain restrictions upon their contact with one another and with those who are unbelievers.
- W. Never contact a member of the opposite sex alone, but, for your protection, always have the presence of a third party; this word is a great help and protection to us.
- X. Fornicators mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:10 are not those who have simply committed a certain sin, but those who live in that sin and remain in it, refusing to repent—vv. 9-11; cf. Rev. 9:21.

**V. "My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous"—1 John 2:1; 1 Cor. 6:11:**

- Y. *If anyone sins* indicates that the regenerated believers can still sin; though they possess the divine life, it is still possible for them to sin if they do not live by the divine life and abide in its fellowship—1 John 2:1.
- Z. If we confess our sins, He, according to His word and based on the redemption through the blood of Jesus, forgives us because He must be faithful in His word and righteous in the blood of Jesus; otherwise, He would be unfaithful and unrighteous—1:7, 9.

**VI. If there is any matter that requires prayer, it is marriage; and if there is anything for which you need to present yourself to the Lord, it is your**

**marriage—Rom. 12:1.**

## **THE SECRET OF THE REIGNING LIFE OF JOSEPH**

*Special Fellowship*

### **Keeping Ourselves for a Proper Marriage in God's Economy**

#### **Scripture Reading:**

##### **Romans 12:1-2**

- 1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
- 2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

##### **Ephesians 4:17-19**

- 17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,
- 18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
- 19 Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.

##### **1 Timothy 4:12**

Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

##### **1 Timothy 5:1-2**

- 1 Do not upbraid an elderly man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers,
- 2 Elderly women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

##### **1 Thessalonians 4:3-4**

- 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication;
- 4 That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.

##### **Hebrews 13:4**

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and the bed undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

##### **Genesis 2:24**

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

##### **Matthew 19:4-6**

- 4 And He answered and said, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,
- 5 And said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh"?
- 6 So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has yoked together, let man not separate.

## **2 Corinthians 6:14**

Do not become dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

## **1 Timothy 1:10**

For fornicators, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever other thing that is opposed to the healthy teaching.

## **1 Corinthians 6:9, 11**

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor homosexuals...

11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

## **Leviticus 18:22**

You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abomination.

## **Leviticus 20:13**

If there is a man who lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

## **Jude 7**

How Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, who in like manner with these gave themselves over to fornication and went after different flesh, are set forth as an example, undergoing the penalty of eternal fire.

## **Romans 1:24, 26-27, 32**

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, so that they dishonor their bodies among themselves,

26 Therefore God gave them up to passions of dishonor; for their females exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature;

27 And likewise also the males, leaving the natural use of the female, burned in their craving toward one another, males with males committing unseemliness and fully receiving in themselves the retribution of their error which was due.

32 Who, though fully knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but also have fellow delight in those who practice them.

## **Hebrews 12:16**

Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one meal gave up his own birthright.

## **1 John 2:1**

My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

## **1 John 1:7, 9**

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## THE SECRET OF THE REIGNING LIFE OF JOSEPH

*Special Fellowship—Group Time*

### **Treasuring Our Teenage Years and a Proper View of Marriage in God's Economy**

#### **Verses for Pray-reading:**

**Rom. 12:1-2** I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

**1 Tim. 4:12** Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

#### **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

In the contact between brothers and sisters there is especially the need for all purity. For this reason, a brother and sister who are close to the same age should not talk privately in a closed room. Either another brother or another sister should be present. Consider the example of the Lord Jesus. He spoke to Nicodemus in a house alone at night, but He talked to the Samaritan woman out in the open during the day. This indicates that the contact between brothers and sisters must be in all purity.

In the church life the traffic in fellowship between brothers and sisters cannot be avoided. If we do not exercise all purity, we may fall into some kind of snare. Many have fallen into a snare because they were careless and failed to exercise purity in their contact with others. Therefore, we would emphasize again and again that the contact between brothers and sisters must be in all purity. (*Life-study of 1 Timothy*, pp. 80-81)

### **A WORD OF WARNING**

In this message we come to chapter four of 1 Thessalonians...After covering these matters, in chapter four Paul injects an inoculation into the believers concerning the most serious germ that damages the church life, the germ of fornication.

Fornication has its source in lust. People would never have a chance to indulge themselves in this lust if they did not have some form of social life. Social life is a hotbed of fornication. A person who does not have a social life is not in danger of falling into fornication. If you live alone and have little contact with others, it is very unlikely that you will commit fornication. But the church life is a meeting life, a communal life. In other words, the church life is a social life. In order to have the church life, we cannot avoid having a communal life, a social life, in which we have considerable contact with one another.

According to history, the problem of fornication has come up over and over again in one church after another. The facts prove that Christian workers in particular are often snared by fornication because they have so much contact with others. Furthermore, fornication has been the factor in damage caused to those in the Pentecostal movement. In certain places this movement has been limited because of the sin of fornication.

In 4:3 Paul says, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from fornication." God's will is that His redeemed people, the believers in Christ, should live a life of holiness according to His holy nature, a life wholly separated unto Him from anything other than Him. For this He is sanctifying us thoroughly (5:23). At Paul's time, both in Corinth and Thessalonica sensuality and immorality were rife in the pagan religions and

even fostered by their pagan worship. Man was made for expressing God (Gen. 1:26). Nothing ruins man for this purpose more than fornication. This prevents man from being holy, separated unto God, and contaminates man to the uttermost in the fulfilling of God's holy purpose. Hence, the apostle strongly charges the newly converted Gentile believers, by sanctification unto God, to abstain from the damage and contamination of fornication, the most gross sin in the eyes of God.

We also need this warning today. In the United States and Europe males and females have social contact with hardly any limitation. Because of this situation, it is easy for people to fall into fornication. In order for churches to exist in these regions, there is a need of a warning concerning fornication.

In verse 3 [of 1 Thes. 4] Paul says that the will of God is our sanctification. This sanctification is versus fornication. In order to have a walk that pleases God, we need to be sanctified.

Nothing damages a believer as much as fornication. According to Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 6, fornication ruins a person's body. Other sins may not damage us subjectively, but fornication damages our body, contaminates our entire being, and makes us utterly unholy. Moreover, fornication is used by God's enemy to spoil the man God created for the fulfillment of His purpose. Therefore, fornication must be altogether abandoned. This is the reason Paul says in 4:3, "Abstain from fornication." The word "abstain" is strong, and it indicates that we should run away from fornication. God's will is to have us fully separated unto Himself, wholly sanctified for the fulfillment of His purpose. This requires that we abstain from fornication.

In verses 4 and 5 Paul continues, "That each one of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, even as also the nations who do not know God." To possess one's vessel is to keep it, to preserve it...To keep or preserve man's vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, is the safeguard against committing fornication.

Sanctification refers more to a holy condition before God; honor, more to a respectable standing before man. Man was created for God's purpose with a high standing, and marriage was ordained by God for the propagation of man to fulfill God's purpose. Hence, marriage should be held in honor (Heb. 13:4). To abstain from fornication is not only to remain in a sanctified condition before God, but also to hold and keep a standing of honor before man. Whenever someone becomes involved in fornication, he is contaminated, and his sanctification is annulled. Moreover, he loses honor before man. Not even unbelievers honor those who commit fornication. Therefore, we must know how to possess, keep, preserve, our own body in sanctification toward God and in honor before man. We must be those who are sanctified unto God and those who have honor before man. In order to be such persons, we must absolutely abstain from fornication and not give ground for suspicion in this matter. (*Life-study of 1 Thessalonians*, pp. 130-133)

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Discuss in your groups concerning the need for us to be renewed in our concept concerning marriage and how crucial it is for God's move that we would have a proper married life.
2. Fellowship among yourselves about the need for us to be pure in the matter of our relationships with the opposite sex. Discuss how Satan has invaded culture today to ruin the young people for God's purpose.
3. Pray together that the Lord would preserve a group of young people in Europe for His purpose, that we would take God's way to remain pure for His purpose and economy, and our marriage.