Extreme Romance weekend notes

FRIDAY NIGHT

**Session 1: God’s design for love and romance.**

Session covers: Our story, and God’s word on love, romance, and commitment; romance: The permanence of the glue and the power of the flame; the importance of being faithful to your spouse even before you meet.

**The gift of romance and physical intimacy**

**Commitment and romance**

**Romantic superglue**

**God’s Word on romance**

1. When God designed marriage, He only included one man

and one woman (Genesis 1-2).

1. When a couple comes together in marriage, God designed

their bond to be permanent (Mark 10:6-9).

3. God tells us to abstain from all sexual immorality (Acts 15:20; 1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3). This includes fornication (sexual immorality before marriage) and adultery (sexual immorality after marriage with someone other than your spouse). In Ephesians 5:3, Paul tells us, “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.” By consulting your conscience, seeking the Holy Spirit, and looking at erotic love from a few different angles, I believe God will make clear what He means by “sexual immorality.”

4. Impurity involves more than overt acts; it starts with and includes our thoughts (Matthew 5:28).

5. God specifically commands us to not defraud each other in the area of sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:6)

**3**It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; **4**that each of you should learn to control his own body[[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20thess%204:3-6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29592a)] in a way that is holy and honorable, **5**not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; **6**and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or defraud him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.

. Defrauding happens when you promise something and don’t pay up, or you create false expectations and don’t come through. I think single people defraud each other when they begin bonding to each other in a romantic way outside the safety of marriage commitment. Romantic involvement implies permanence and if one or both young people are not willing to commit, they are misleading each other. By doing so, they’re not only causing future pain in the person they are defrauding, but they are also stealing from that person’s future spouse.

6. We are to love our wives like Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25) **25**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. This kind of love, I believe, includes fidelity to her during *and* before marriage.

7. All of our relationships should be governed by agape love (I Corinthians 13), which means that we should put the needs of others (including our future spouse) ahead of our own (Philippians 2:4) **3**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. **4**Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others..

8. God loves to see sex and erotic love enjoyed in the proper boundaries of marriage – just read Song of Solomon.

I think we can glean some guidelines for our romantic relationships by reasoning from these principles.

**One man. One woman**

**The blazing fires of passionate romance**

**Commitment before romance**

**What if I’ve already messed up?**

**Romance to the glory of God**

**Recognize the Reality of Your Future Spouse**

**I have had a crush on several guys, but have not been in a real romantic relationship. Have I given part of my heart away?**

SATURDAY MORNING

**Session 2: A closer look at compatibility, soul-mates, maintaining emotional purity.**

Session covers: How to discover if a person is right for you without doing long term damage; managing long distance relationships; the truth about chemistry and soul-mates; dealing with crushes; making your parents your greatest allies.

**If we don’t enjoy a romantic relationship, how will I know if this person is my soul mate or if we have good chemistry?**

**You said we should keep all romance till after a marriage commitment. Are you saying we shouldn’t even hold hands or have intimate conversations until the wedding day?**

**How can we know if we are sexually compatible if we don’t do some experimenting?**

**Sex and soul intimacy**

**Trust**

**Fidelity**

**Selflessness**

**The sexual reality**

**Won’t sex in marriage with only one person get boring? I though variety was the spice of life?**

**How can I know that I am willing to commit to someone if I don’t have a romantic relationship with him/her first? In a commitment-first relationship, isn’t there a danger of rushing into something you may regret later?**

**What if I marry the wrong person?**

**Are you saying I could marry any Christian and make it work?**

**What do you suggest in the case of a long distance attraction where the couple wants to start a relationship, but they don’t know each other enough to commit to marriage?**

**Be Open with Your Parents**

**Session 3: Finding and becoming the right one.**

Session covers: Non-negotiable qualities you need in a spouse; qualities you need to develop before you are ready to say “I do”; developing healthy non-romantic relationships; the importance of modesty.

**A close walk with God**

**A compatible life calling**

**Moral purity**

**Honesty**

**Quality relationships with family.**

**Inner Beauty**

**Make a wise choice**

**See Your Family as a Training School for Marriage**

**Servanthood**

**Repentance and Forgiveness**

**Gentleness**

**Affirmation**

**Build Healthy Non-Romantic Relationships**

**Where’s the line?**

**The satisfaction of contentment**

**A man’s job: protector, not stealer of hearts**

**A woman’s greatest gift: her beauty**

**Friends who pursue purity**

LUNCH

ROMANCE JEOPARDY GAME

**Session 4: Escaping the devastation of lust.**

Session covers: Practical battle strategies for conquering lust; evaluating the long- term consequences. From Heidi: True beauty and body image, and a woman’s perspective on dealing with lust.

**E-Eternal perspective**

**S-Sacrifice your body, Starve your sex drive, Set yourself up for success**

**C-Crucify your flesh, Covenant not to lust, Cleanse your house, Control your mind**

**A-Apply the warnings of Scripture and Accountability**

**P-Perceive women the way Jesus would**

**E-Enjoy God and His ways**

**A woman’s perspective on dealing with lust**

**A word of warning and hope**

**Session 5 Communication 101**

**Communication 101**

Everyone is communicating, but not everyone is doing it well. We’re always conveying something with our words, actions, and silence. Because good communication is so vital to a healthy marriage, you would be wise to begin mastering the basics.

Communication involves three basic elements: **Perception**, how we each uniquely see reality; **Expression**, how we try to share our point of view with others; and **Understanding**, how we try to make sense of the messages that the other person sends our way.

**1. Perception.**

**The process of processing**

**What we miss…**

**The blinders of predetermined expectations**

**What we add…**

**Observation vs. interpretation**

**2. Expression.**

What is in a word?

You say it best when you say nothing at all…

If you don’t know what’s wrong, I’m not going to tell you!

It’s not what you say, it’s what they heard

*The only thing that gets communicated is what the other person interprets.*

**3. Understanding.**

Solomon writes that it is foolish to answer a matter before you have heard it (Proverbs 18:13), and James urges every man to be quick to hear and slow to speak (James 1:19).

What forest? All I see is this tree

Sorry, I was distracted

**Ways to overcome the challenges of communication**

**Dealing with problems of perception**

*“In humility, consider others better than yourselves.”*

*Acknowledge the limitations of perception.*

*Know the difference between observation and interpretation.*

*Try not to label or stereotype people, but instead reserve judgment.*

*Look for the good in people.*

**Dealing with problems of expression**

*“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.”*

When you talk, it should be for the benefit of others. If you speak with the other person in mind, your ability to communicate will be greatly improved. Here are some ways to do this.

*Shape the message for the listener.*

*Stop and ask for feedback to be sure the message is being interpreted accurately.*

Take time to ask, “What do you think? Do you agree? What did you hear me say? What did the situation look like from your perspective?”

*Use “I” statements instead of “you” statements.*

*Avoid statements like “always” and “never.”*

 *Say what you mean.*

*Be aware of semantic differences.*

 *Be conscious of the nonverbal signals you may be sending.*

**Dealing with problems of understanding**

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

*Give your undivided attention.*

*Don’t assume you know what they are going to say.*

*Give descriptive feedback.*

*Give the speaker a safe place to open up*.

*Listen for why a person may be saying something*.

**Session 6: Discovering God’s purpose for your life.**

Session covers: Discovering your calling and God’s will for your life; making the most of the single years; learning to rest in God’s love, wisdom and sovereignty.

### Discover Your Calling

**God is my creator**

**God has a revealed will**

**God directs through our gifts and desires**

**God is sovereign**

**Take the next step**

Don’t let your talents go to waste. Someday we will all stand before our Creator and give an account of what we did with what we were given. And to whom much is given, much will be required.

**Be Satisfied by God**

**Prayer**

**Gratitude**

**Worship**

**Bible Reading**

**Nature**

**Grace in the midst of morning sickness**

**Trust God to Know What’s Best**

**He is infinite in love**

**He is infinite in wisdom**

**He is infinite in power**