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There are numerous questions that young people ask about the possibility of having a pure romantic relationship with a member of the opposite sex as a kind of preparation for marriage. We do not want to unjustly accuse these young people of disobedience because of this thinking. A lot of young people have honest intentions and are worried about the difficulty of finding a life-partner after graduation and becoming involved in a career. This does not, however, prevent us from discussing this matter as fully as possible.

1. What is emotion?

Emotion is a psychological predisposition caused by a number of emotional responses to a certain subject which may have aroused in the person certain inclinations. It is an inclination of the self toward a certain subject. It is acquired through experience and teaching.

There is a difference between emotion itself and an emotional response. The former is acquired gradually and repetitively while the latter is a temporary experience.

A simple examination of the components of human personality shows us that the personality of a human being is the product of the interaction between the individual and the environment. An individual consists of what is innate such as the instincts, responses to stimuli, psychological needs, and impulses as well as what is consciously acquired such as emotions, habits, tendencies, and what is unconscious such as complexes. The home, school, church, and general environment all play important roles in the formation of the personality.

It is therefore clear that emotions are an important component of the personality. Its sound channeling contributes to the building up of the young person, not to his destruction.

There are different types of emotions. There are some that are personal, subjective, and concrete such as the love of the child for its mother. They can be material and group-oriented such as his love for his family or school, or they can be objective and abstract such as love of honesty, sacrifice, and truthfulness.

2. How does an emotional relationship occur?

Meeting with someone could arouse certain emotions, or the desire to dominate the other. This stage is similar, in many cases, to the relationship of a child with his mother, or a daughter with her father.

In the case of healthy development, the adolescent begins to change the objects of his or her love from those inside the family to those that are outside it. If this does not happen, the adolescent fails in his or her public and family life since he cannot adjust to the new situation or be weaned from the emotional ties of the family. This is the cause of many problems nowadays.

Thus, we can see that **emotion is intimately connected to two factors:**

1. Self:

Unless I am attracted to the object of my emotions, I will not become attached to it. There is a taking and there is something gained from this emotion.

3. After the examinations:

+ Submit all your efforts and your answers to the Lord Jesus Christ who loves you and prepares what is good for you.

+ Beware of imagining that your thoughts, desires, or your ambitions are going to make you happy. Real happiness is in Christ, daily satisfaction is in Him, and our eternal and infinite portion is in him. As for the things of the earth no matter how high or great, they are nothing but dust, believe me. Have a calm and serene spirit in the Lord and may He provide for tomorrow: "Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (Mt. 6: 34).

May the Lord Jesus be with you... the only secret of your success.

2. The body:

the emotions are one of the constituents of the human personality. The psyche, with its impulses, its instincts, its different components, is intimately related to the body, and expresses itself through it. Anger affects the body, and so do joy and lust.

Hence, we realize that there is a vast difference between love and emotion, no matter how pure it may seem to be. One quickly discovers the fact of its relation to the body. No matter how giving, self-sacrificing, and willing to do anything for the loved one it may appear to be, when it is tested, it can change into a bitter hatred at the first dispute or humiliation.

The example of Amnon and Tamar is a case in point. Amnon loved his step-sister, and when he took what he wanted, "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her." (2 Sam. 13:15).

This probably explains why so many marriages that were based on emotions have failed. Many crimes may be committed out of revenge on the part of a lover if the feelings of the beloved change or are diverted to someone else, or if the emotion is not reciprocated.

In contrast, love is self-sacrificing and spiritual. Love is total giving without reservation and measure. Emotion is a deal that is carefully calculated, but love is total self-sacrifice in Christ, a profound unity, and a spirituality that is not moved by the body but by the Spirit of God.

Love, therefore, is more stable, deeper, and more lasting. Every marriage that is built on a sacrificing spiritual love will be successful.

In the marriages of this age, we see the commercial spirit: what has he benefited and what have I benefited? Which of us has won this round? But spiritual love rises above self, body, and money. If each partner is willing, because of his life in Christ, to give himself or herself to the other without hesitation, how can problems arise?

4. How should a young man choose his life-partner?

Our advice to young men is not to pursue their emotions while they are still university students or even when they are starting on a career after graduation. This is not the way to a sound marriage. Concentrate your hearts and interests on your salvation and on your studies and work.

When a person is spiritually, psychologically, socially, and financially mature and ready, he can begin to think of marriage in a sound way. He takes the matter to God and to his father confessor. He devotes to it prayers, fasts, masses, in total submission and obedience to the voice of God. And soon enough, he will begin to perceive the will of God over the horizon. He hears the voice of God clearly in the depth of his being and through his father confessor, and the voice of God is only clear if we ask for it persistently and sincerely without ulterior motive and without insisting on a certain course of action.

Marriage is a sharing of life and its responsibilities and a union governed by giving and

sacrificing. That is why it should not be entered into lightly, or we run the risk of building a new home on the weak foundation of emotion.

Keep close, dear young man, to your Christ, your Bible, and your Church as well as your studies, and postpone this matter to the proper time. It is certain that we change from year to year. Listen to what the Bible says: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord." (Pr. 18: 22). "A prudent wife is from the Lord." (Pr. 19: 14). "Who can find a virtuous wife: for her worth is far above rubies." (Pr. 31: 10).

Take your time, my friend, and determine the path you will travel. Be fixed in the life of salvation so that you are not lost like those who are; while you are looking for water, make sure you do not end with a mirage. Make eternity your first priority, for rest on earth can only come in Jesus Christ.