

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

January/February 1986

ISSN 8756-1336

Rules for Courtship

The following, which I wish we could shout from the housetops, was published in 1962 as a small leaflet entitled "Rules for Keeping Company." No author's name is given. It is reprinted here by permission from Liguori Publications, Liguori, Missouri 63057.

"A serious problem is presented to parents and other directors of youth in the wrong views of courtship that are prevalent today. Courtship usually means the association between a marriageable man and a marriageable woman as a mutual tryout of one another's character for marriage. It is so fraught with moral danger that the rules governing it should be strictly enforced:

1. Close association and friendship, or what is known as company-keeping (dating), between a man and a woman who cannot get married, or who do not intend ever to get married, or who should not think of marriage for some years to come, is always seriously wrong. Therefore: (1) nothing can justify company-keeping with a divorced or married person; (2) if one does not intend to get married, one has no right to keep another person from other opportunities to contract marriage, and no right to run the risks of company-keeping; (3) high school students and other young people for whom marriage is out of the question for many years have no right to steady company-keeping. The reason? Because the dangers in company-keeping are grave, and only a grave reason such as possibility of marriage can justify subjecting oneself to such dangers.

2. Company-keeping does not entitle man and woman to the right of long, private, unguarded interviews with one another, nor to any of the familiarities (better to be called sensual indulgences) that usually arise from

such lonely trysts. Company-keeping is safe only when it is kept for the most part out in the open, i.e., in such a manner that others may or could observe it at all times and see nothing wrong.

3. Company-keeping must not be too prolonged. It does not require several years for a man and woman to ascertain whether they are suited to one another for marriage. If it is possible, it is, after a reasonable time (six months to a year), obligatory on the man to speak of getting married before long. If there be obstacles to marriage within that time, they must do all the more to keep out of occasions of sin (such as lonely meetings) if they are to be allowed to continue going together.

The world is doing all in its power to make company-keeping an inevitable source of sin for young people. Many parents have taken sides with the world. The above rules should be explained early to Catholic (and to all Christian) young men and women, and then duly enforced by those who have them in charge."

My Mother

In the last letter I said that it was out of the question for Mother to leave the Quarryville Home. A brief visit with us in July reinforced our conviction that the Home was where she was most contented, but in September my brother Dave Howard took her to Illinois for a three-week visit. She was so happy there that he and Phyllis decided to keep her indefinitely. Although still forgetful and confused as to chronology and geography, she eats better, walks with a walker, and can play a mean game of Scrabble. Thank you for praying. This is an answer "exceedingly abundantly above" anything I had asked. "O ye of little faith! Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Instructions for Shepherds (and Sheep)

St. Paul's second letter to the young pastor Timothy is packed with practical advice. Most of it applies to all of us who call ourselves Christians. Check this sampling:

- Take your share of suffering 2 Tm 1:8
- Take strength from the grace of God 2:1
- Take your share of hardship 2:3
- Remember Jesus Christ..... 2:8
- Try hard to show yourself worthy 2:15
- Avoid empty and worldly chatter 2:16
- Turn from wayward impulses 2:22
- Pursue justice, integrity, love, peace 2:22
- Have nothing to do with foolish speculations 2:23
- Do not be quarrelsome 2:23
- Be kindly towards all 2:24
- Be a good teacher, tolerant, gentle 2:24
- Keep clear of men who put money and pleasure in the place of God 3:6
- Stand by the truths you have learned.... 3:14
- Keep calm and sane at all times..... 4:5
- Face hardship 4:5
- Do all the duties of your calling 4:5

Most of us, I believe, will find that we do not score very high on this test. Would your pastor? Thank God it isn't up to us to give him a grade, but it is certainly up to us to pray for him. He carries a tremendous burden of responsibility to God and to the flock God has assigned to him as shepherd. Shouldn't we be praying regularly for our pastors? Shouldn't we ask God to show us ways to make their burdens lighter? One of the ways, surely, would be for us, the flock, to obey these injunctions. Don't they apply to us too? God help us all, sheep and shepherds alike.

A Note of Thanks

Ann Spangler of Servant Publications had been graciously taking the responsibility of putting together the Newsletter. I sent her the material and she brought it into order, deciding on sequence of articles, etc. She now has new responsibilities which require her to turn over the job to Mary Case. Thank you ever so much, Ann, for your help in the past, and Mary for yours in the future.

Drastic Obedience

"One reads tomes on the work of the Holy Spirit when one five-minutes of drastic obedience would make things as clear as a sunbeam." Oswald Chambers: *My Utmost for His Highest*

There Is No Other Way

In order to get to a place called Laity Lodge in Texas you have to drive into a riverbed. The road takes you down a steep, rocky hill into a canyon and straight into the water. There is a sign at the water's edge which says, "Yes. You drive in the river."

One who has made up his mind to go to the uttermost with God will come to a place as unexpected and perhaps looking as impossible to travel as that riverbed looks. He may glance around for an alternative route, but if he wants what God promises His faithful ones, he must go straight into the danger. There is no other way.

The written word is our direction. Trust it. Obey it. Drive in the river and get to Laity Lodge. Moses said to Israel, "I offer you the choice of life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life and then you and your descendants will live; love the Lord your God, obey him, and hold fast to him: that is life for you."

When you take the risk of obedience, you find solid rock beneath you—and markers, evidence that someone has traveled this route before. "The Lord your God will cross over at your head. . . he will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not be discouraged or afraid" (Dt 30:19, 20; 31:3, 8 NEB). It's what the old gospel song puts so simply:

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."

© Copyright 1986 by Elisabeth Elliot Gren

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter is published six times a year by Servant Publications. Donations to the newsletter are tax-deductible and should be sent to: The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, P.O. Box 7711, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

The Spirit of Renunciation

Francois Coillard, missionary of the Zambesi, wrote, "When we see missionary festivals so run after—when we hear these stirring hymns, these sublime and moving protestations of our compassion for the perishing Heathen, and of our entire devotion to Him whom we acknowledge as *King*, should we not expect to see a whole crusade on the march for the conquest of the world, singing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers'? One might suppose that all we have and all we hope for had been laid on the altar, waiting for nothing but the fire from heaven. And in reality, what have we done? What have we given? What have we sacrificed? Where does this spirit of renunciation show itself in the details of daily life? What discipline are we willing to submit to? What ease, what luxuries have we denied ourselves?

"Have we not indeed often grudged to God's service what we could spare? And alas even this half-hearted zeal soon evaporates. The fit of spasmodic devotion once over, we take back from God what we had professed to give Him; we return to the idols of our hearts, refuse His claims, and leave the Heathen to perish without compunction." (Quoted by Amy Carmichael in a private letter, May 2, 1899)

What Do You Want Your Biographer to Say about You?

My brother Tom gave me a collection of essays on the writing of biography, to help in the work I am at present engaged in. There's a lesson for all of us, I think, in this paragraph from an essay written in 1932 by Claude M. Fuess, headmaster of Phillips Academy:

"If [Gamaliel] Bradford [a famous biographer] were, in some whimsical mood, to turn his analytic gaze in my direction, what should I like him to notice: that golden Phi Beta Kappa key or that unpaid laundry bill; that ten-dollar check sent to an indigent cousin or that towel pilfered from the Pullman Company; that unprinted ode to spring or that kick furtively bestowed upon a stray cat?"

The Golden Rule for Roommates

- If you open it, close it.
 - If you turn it on, turn it off.
 - If you unlock it, lock it up.
 - If you break it, admit it.
 - If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.
 - If you borrow it, return it.
 - If you value it, take care of it.
 - If you make a mess, clean it up.
 - If you move it, put it back.
 - If it belongs to someone else and you want to use it, get permission.
 - If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
 - If it's none of your business, don't ask questions.
 - If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
 - If it will brighten someone's day, say it.
- (From a letter to Ann Landers, reprinted in the Singles paper, Calvary Church, Placentia, California. Thanks, Second-Milers.)

Prayer

- Please pray for me the prayer Paul prayed for the Colossian Christians: "that your outward lives, which men see, may bring credit to your master's name, and that you may bring joy to his heart by bearing genuine Christian fruit in all that you do, and that your knowledge of God may grow yet deeper" (Col 1:10 JBP).
- I need all the prayer I can get for the speaking engagements listed in the itinerary. Are there some of you who will pray specifically on the dates given? Ask that my words may carry God's message, that there will be ears to hear and hearts ready to obey, and that the Holy Spirit will grant power.
- Please thank God with me for the reception my book *Passion and Purity* has had. Never have I received so much mail so soon. It is greatly cheering to know there are still young people who search for the beacon of purity. Pray that the book will be put into the hands of many more who need its message on virginity.

Letter from a Reader

"Several years ago you sent me the prayer of Betty Scott Stam on a small piece of parchment. It is a prayer of dedication and commitment and has turned my life around. I still carry it in my wallet and read it from time to time. I also share it with others whenever I feel it is appropriate.

"I prayed that prayer nearly every day: 'Lord, I give up all my own plans and purposes . . . ' until I could say it all and truly agree in my heart. The last part, 'at any cost,' took six months to achieve. Once I did, things moved quickly. My husband of twenty-three years divorced me to marry a younger woman. But God was gracious . . . [The writer tells the story of how He has led and provided.] Today, four years later, I am praying that prayer again, and I'm feeling a call I've felt since I was twelve—to the foreign mission field."

Often, as Jesus told us (Lk 9:24), finding life (in heavenly terms) entails losing life (in earthly terms). What we had depended on gives way. "Thy will be done" means mine be undone. Betty Scott Stam could not have known that in a few years she would be beheaded by Chinese Communists when she prayed,

Lord, I give up all my own plans and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept Thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all, utterly to Thee to be Thine forever. Fill me and seal me with Thy Holy Spirit. Use me as Thou wilt. Send me where Thou wilt. Work out Thy whole will in my life at any cost, now and forever. Amen.

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

Servant Ministries, Inc.
Post Office Box 7711
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107

Travel Schedule Feb./March 1986

February 7-9 Tennessee Valley Women's Retreat, Mrs. Niedermeyer 205-881-3440.

February 9 Huntsville, Alabama, Faith Chapel 205-852-1606.

February 11 Topsfield, Massachusetts, Congregational Church Women.

February 12 Wenham, Massachusetts, Gordon College chapel 617-927-2300.

February 13 La Mirada, California, Biola University chapel 213-994-0351.

February 13 Anaheim, California, Youth for Christ staff and board conference 312-668-6600.

February 17 Wellesley, Massachusetts, Campus Crusade for Christ, Ginger Paluba, RFD #2, Winsted, Connecticut 06098.

February 21 Prattville, Alabama, First Presbyterian Church 205-365-6387.

February 28 Toronto, Ontario, Canada Christian College, 416-923-8833.

March 1 London, Ontario, Women Alive, 705-726-3803.

March 15 Natick, Massachusetts, Daybreak Crisis Pregnancy Center, Carol Rosa, 617-489-4276.

March 21, 22 Calgary, Alberta, Women Alive, 705-726-3803.

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 14
Ann Arbor, MI