

I. Introduction

- A. [Mother's Day] You know you are mother when...
 - 1. Your child throws up and you catch it.
 - 2. Someone else's kid throws up at a party and you keep eating.
 - 3. You count the number of sprinkles on each kid's cupcake to make sure they are equal.
 - 4. You hear your mother's voice coming out of your mouth when you say, "Not in your good clothes."
 - 5. You can place food on a plate without anything touching.
 - 6. You hope ketchup is a vegetable because it's the only one your child eats.
 - 7. You fast-forward through the scene when the hunter shoots Bambi's mother.
 - 8. Your son just got his driver's license, and you still have his baby clothes.
 - 9. You have time to shave only one leg at a time.
 - 10. You hide in the bathroom to be alone.
- B. Today we are continuing our series called, Can You Feel It? We're talking about God's Wisdom on Human Emotion. So far we've seen what the Bible says about anger and bitterness, fear and anxiety, envy and jealousy, sadness and sorrow.
- C. Today I want to talk about a magical, mystical power that God has woven into every heart. We have talked about it before, but I get a lot of questions and comments on this topic, so let's look at it again. And we'll look at this from a different angle.
 - 1. *"Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" Ephesians 4:3, NKJV.*
 - 2. *"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection" Colossians 3:14, NKJV.*
- D. Can you spot which word appears in both verses? It is the word "bond." That word refers to glue that holds people together.
- E. We are talking about emotions, and one of the reasons why God made you an emotional person is so that you could form healthy attachments, healthy bonds with other people. God gave you a built-in glue to attach you to other people.
- F. Our topic today is BONDING—emotional, spiritual, and physical bonding.
- G. There are different kinds of bonds:
 - 1. Parental bond
 - 2. Friendship bond
 - 3. Family bond
 - 4. Coworker bond
 - 5. Marital bond—for most of this sermon, I'm talking about the marital bond. The same principles apply to all of them, but that's my focus today.

II. What is bonding

- A. Bonding is a magnetic attraction that glues two people together. It's a weaving together of your emotions—and of your mind, spirit, and body.
- B. You read about it in the Bible in places like:
 - 1. *Young Woman: "One night as I lay in bed, I yearned deeply for my lover, but he did not come. So I said to myself, 'I will get up now and roam the city, searching for him in all its streets and squares.' But my search was in vain. The watchmen stopped me as they made their rounds, and I said to them, 'Have you seen him anywhere, this one I love so much?'" Song of Solomon 2:16 NLT.*
- C. The young woman here has the kind of MAGNETIC ATTRACTION to her man so that she can't stand being out of his presence.
- D. And what I want to show is that it is this kind of BOND that we have to understand, and cherish, and protect if we want to experience the kind of love that God created us for.

III. The Importance of Bonding

- A. It's a perfect topic for Mother's Day, because the first attachment almost all of us ever have is a bond with our mom.
- B. Babies form their earliest bonds with their mothers, through snuggling, and feeding, and smelling, and listening, and being touched and stroked and cradled. Bonding is so important that babies who don't bond won't thrive, have a tough time forming attachments as adults, and can even die.
- C. So the mommy-baby bond is super important.
- D. And one of the toughest times families go through is when that child gets married, and the mommy bond has to take a back seat to the new marital bond. That's called "letting go" and we have to use a pry bar on some moms to make it happen.
- E. I want to give you a truth that I hope echoes inside you for the rest of your life:
 - 1. The quality of your life depends on the quality of the bonds you form and nurture.
- F. The quality of your bonds is a better predictor of your overall happiness than your money, your career, your sex life, your retirement benefits, your physical appearance, or the largeness of your house.
- G. So four questions:
 - 1. How do you form a bond?
 - 2. How do you mess up a bond?
 - 3. How do you maintain a bond?
 - 4. What is the most important bond?

IV. How Do You Form a Bond?

- A. The simple answer is you form a bond by being together, and doing intimate things together.
- B. One anthropologist [Desmond Morris, who I disagree with a lot] has studied the pattern of human bonding, and suggests that when we create a bond, we go through twelve predictable stages. These stages lead to total intimacy. [I found these steps in two books: Bonding and Rebonding by Donald Joy.

1. **EYE TO BODY:** This is when you first notice the other person. Margi and I both vividly remember when we first saw each other. I was teaching a Bible class, and in walked this elegant, sexy, classy woman. My heart skipped a beat. I lost my place and had to regain my composure.
2. **EYE TO EYE:** This is when you notice the other person noticing you. You make eye contact. Your eyes meet. You may be embarrassed. You may be bold and smile. It doesn't matter. All you know is that the look tells you that you can take the next step. The Bible says,
 - a) *"You have ravished my heart, my treasure, my bride. I am overcome by one glance of your eyes, by a single bead of your necklace."* Song of Solomon 4:9, NLT.
3. **VOICE TO VOICE:** In this phase, you say hello. You begin to speak and get to know each other. Men, listen up: **TALKING IS BONDING**, so pay attention.
 - a) At first, your talking is casual: Safe stuff, impersonal stuff. But the more you bond, the more your talking becomes **EMOTIONAL**: Hopes and dreams, heartaches and needs. Talking and listening is a crucial part of bonding.
 - (1) *"Young Man: 'My dove is hiding behind some rocks, behind an outcrop on the cliff. Let me see you; let me hear your voice. For your voice is pleasant, and you are lovely.'" Song of Solomon 2:14, NLT.*
4. **HAND TO HAND:** Do you remember the first time you held hands with your girlfriend? Your boyfriend? Your spouse? It's a big deal. In fact, for all of these steps **THE FIRST TIME IS A BIG DEAL** and that's one reason why it's really healthy to save some "first times" for marriage.
 - a) Have you seen that TV show, *Lie to Me*? It's about a guy who's really good at catching little physical moves that convey emotional messages.
 - b) Remember when you were dating, and you laughed together, and one of you reached out and touched the other person on the arm?
 - c) Never underestimate the power of physical touch.
 - d) In friendship bonds, this stage isn't holding hands; it's a handshake or a pat on the back.
5. **ARM TO SHOULDER:** This is that world famous move where you pretend to yawn and end up with your arm around your girlfriend's shoulder. It's not yet a hug, but it's a gesture that you are exclusive with this person. You're beginning to face the world together. And your relationship is really going somewhere.
 - a) In friendship bonds, or maybe with coworker bonds, this is a friendly hug, or like the huddles we did in our Concert of Prayer.
 - b) This is where you share a mission together. You work on a project together. You fight an enemy together. You share a foxhole together. You do ministry together. You go to Africa together. You bond.
 - c) **NOTE: THIS IS AS FAR AS MOST BONDS SHOULD GO. ANYTHING PAST THIS STAGE IS FOR MARRIED COUPLES, OR COUPLES MOVING TOWARD MARRIAGE.**
6. **ARM TO WAIST:** One thing that you missed if you're less than 30 years old is having a car with bench seats. Most older cars had a single bench seat in the front. You could sit three across and of course your girlfriend sat right at your side. In fact—in an age when nobody wore seat belts—if you turned your car fast enough, she'd slide over to you.
 - a) When you see people walking side by side, with their arms around each other's waist, you know that something deep is going on. Usually, this is the posture for the first **RISKY CONVERSATIONS** you have.
 - b) It's too intense to look into each other's eyes, so you look ahead. And that's fitting. Because you're learning how you might face the world together with this person.
 - c) That kind of talk is **CRUCIAL**. You can't have a good bond with a person you don't know, and that takes lots of talking and listening.
 - d) If the person you're dating doesn't see life through God's lenses in the Bible, then 2 Cor 6:14 kicks in. There, God warns you not to be unequally yoked with a person who doesn't share your beliefs about God, life, and living for Jesus.
7. **FACE TO FACE:** This is your first kiss. Now I want to **PAUSE HERE** and talk to our students because you shouldn't have to worry about this for a long time.
 - a) First, let me say that I'm sorry that we as grownups have made a world that puts so much sexual pressure on you. You have enough to deal with just growing up without all the added pressures that we have caused you to face.
 - b) Second, let me say that it's really great if you are interested in dating, and in members of the opposite sex. It's also okay if you really don't care much about the opposite sex yet. Don't worry—in time you will, and don't let anybody pressure you. God gave you your sex drive, and He wants the very best for you.
 - c) But the very best includes you waiting until you are married for these more advanced stages of bonding. Do you know why? Because **EVERY SEXUAL BOND THAT YOU CREATE WILL HAUNT YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU BREAK IT.** If you just fool around with these bonding steps, you are going to glue your heart to people you'll never see again, except in your memory. And those memories will make it harder for you to bond to the ultimate person you choose to marry.

- d) We totally support you staying a virgin, and that includes ALL sexual contact—including with your hands, your mouth, or going all the way. It's awesome and wonderful and fun and feels good and is great, but it will break your heart if you break God's laws on this stuff. The only reason people mess around with the bonding process is either because they don't respect themselves, or they don't respect you. So respect others and **INSIST THAT THEY RESPECT YOU.**
8. **HAND TO HEAD:** Stroking the hair, embracing the face, touching the cheek, the chin, the neck, and the ears. Your head is your most vulnerable part, and to let somebody near indicates a high level of trust.
- You can see why this level of bonding is extremely powerful. You begin to let down your guard. You become vulnerable. It's very hard to turn back.
 - There is only one more phase left, and that is intimacy. This is where the Bible talks about being naked and unashamed. And this is where a bond must now move from a public setting to a private setting. And this is where the **BOND MUST BE PROTECTED BY AN EXCLUSIVE LIFETIME COMMITMENT THAT GOD CALLS MARRIAGE.**
 - "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Genesis 2:24, NKJV.*
9. **HAND TO BODY:**
10. **MOUTH TO BREAST:**
11. **HAND TO GENITAL**
12. **GENITAL TO GENITAL**
- [I hope I'm not offending anybody's sensibilities. But our society has put sexuality on a front burner, and God has a lot to say about it. We in the church better be ready to meet people where they're at, and so many are struggling with relationships, marriage, and sexuality that it's time we shined God's light on the subject. So, no apologies.]
- C. How do you form a bond? Look, talk, listen, share, touch. Not rocket science.
- V. How do you mess up a bond?
- Rush it.
 - The faster you bond, the weaker your bond will be. It will come apart as soon as times get tough. If you skip steps, and rush straight to sex, you will have a fragile bond.
 - The faster you form your bond, the weaker it is. You've got to take your time, especially at the earlier steps. Think of it as building a house. If the foundation is weak, the house will crack. The first six steps are your foundation. Take your time, do it right, and build a strong one. Love is patient, says the Bible.
 - Dilute it.
 - Every person you bond with sexually will dilute your future bond with your husband or wife. To adulterate means to dilute or water something down. Adultery waters down your ability to form a satisfying, powerful, deep, intimate bond with your spouse.
 - Repeated sexual experiences with lots of partners will haunt your married life for a long time. Respect yourself enough to save yourself for marriage, and to focus your bond on **ONE PERSON.** If you've already gone too far, there is hope and redemption for you. And God can heal you, but you have to follow his wisdom on human emotion.
 - This applies to **PORNOGRAPHY** too. Porn is an artificial bond with a person you don't know. And it haunts your memory.
 - The Bible describes a woman, who seduces a man, and when you dilute your ability to bond by sleeping with a lot of partners—this is what the Bible says:
 - "So she seduced him with her pretty speech. With her flattery she enticed him. He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter or like a trapped stag, awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. // He was like a bird flying into a snare; little knowing it would cost him his life. Listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words. Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path. For she has been the ruin of many; numerous men have been her victims. Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death" Proverbs 7:21-27, NLT.*
 - Don't be surprised if you have a lot of sex partners, and can't feel close to people. You've diluted your bond, and you need to pull totally back from that lifestyle, and give God time to heal you.
 - The last thing I want is for you to feel terrible—though maybe God is trying to get your attention—I want you to know God is always the God of another second chance, and he lets people start over.
 - Avoid it.
 - A lot of people are scared of love. Commitment phobic and if that's you, you make sense to me. You've been hurt deeply—wounded. And you don't want to get close. I get that.
 - But I also get that the Holy Spirit wants to heal you. He can redeem the worst situation. He wants you to really live and that means taking a risk on love.
 - God didn't design you to live on an island. He didn't design you to harden your heart. You won't thrive. You'll grow cold and cynical and dead.
 - Mess up your priorities.
 - Priority one: marriage.
 - Priority two: parental.
 - Priority three: extended family

4. Priority four: everyone else.
5. Don't let anybody switch the priorities on you. Men, the woman you married is more important than your mom, get it? And if you don't tell your mom, your wife will. Good luck.

VI . How do you maintain a bond?

- A. This one is simple to say and hard to do.
- B. You maintain a bond repeating the 12 steps over and over, and that includes the lower steps of looking, talking, and simple touching.
- C. The Bible frequently describes love in terms that tie us, bond us, glue us, attach us, and connect us deeply with our beloved. That kind of bonding is a God-given ability that lies at the core of every healthy, intimate, relationship.
 1. *"Drink water from your own well—share your love only with your wife. Why spill the water of your springs in public, having sex with just anyone? You should reserve it for yourselves. Don't share it with strangers. Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving doe, a graceful deer. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love." Proverbs 5:15-19, NLT.*
- D. There's a legitimate, biblical CAPTIVATION in this kind of intimate love. It is at the core of every healthy, romantic relationship.
- E. How do you form a bond? Look, talk, listen, share, touch. Not rocket science.
- F. How do you nurture a bond? Look, talk, listen, share, touch. Not rocket science. If you stop doing these actions, don't be surprised if your bond begins to evaporate.
- G. And I know. You're busy, you have kids, you're running them all over the place, and you're tired. I get it.
- H. All the more reason to cherish and nurture your bond.
- I. One of my best pastor friends told me, even the best marriage is never two years from a divorce court.

VII . What is your most important bond?

- A. Your most important bond is the one you form with God.
 1. *"One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple" Psalms 27:4, NKJV.*
- B. When you bond with God, he makes all your other bonds strong, and holy, and satisfying. You can't be right with God, and wrong with people.
- C. Jesus gathered a bunch of disciples. What did he do with them? Talked. Listened. Did stuff together. Spent time. Went fishing. Joked. Laughed. Shared life together. They bonded.
- D. And when they bonded with Jesus, they bonded with God. (John 14)
- E. The more you love and know Jesus, and spend time with Jesus, the more you bond with him. And when you think of his sacrifice on the Cross, it hits you. Especially when you know that he was sacrificed for you.
- F. God wants you to bond with him. Look, talk, listen, share, touch.
 1. Through the Bible. Through prayer. Through worship. Through touching other people's lives in Jesus' name.
- G. We are talking about God's Wisdom on Human Emotion. Never forget, the quality of your life depends on the quality of the bonds you form and nurture.
- H. Bonds are precious things. If you have a good one, don't let it go.
 1. *"Many waters cannot quench love; neither can rivers drown it. If a man tried to buy love with everything he owned, his offer would be utterly despised." SS 8:7.*
- I. My prayer is that you'll have deep bonds that bring you great happiness, bring God great glory, and bring into the world a shining picture of a God who loves them and draws them with bonds of love.