Episode #28 - Climbing the Ladder to Marriage

The purpose of this episode is to provide guidelines and protection.
As you go up the steps of the ladder you increase the level of commitment
side rails support the step. If you step off the side rails - you fall.

- This applies to parents but could also be used by adults walking through a relationship
- As an adult -
    - Are you ready for marriage?
    - If you are not ready, then why date?

Steps & Rails:

1. First Step (Introduction)
    - Don't awaken love before its time. Song of Solomon 3:5.
    - How are they with other people? - family, friends, coworkers
    - Ask a bunch of questions – Creflo Dollar
    - Are they humble enough to admit when they are wrong?
    - Have you seen consistent character over time?
    - Do they have a relationship with God? (equally yoked)

2. One-on-one time (Deeper connection)
    - More personal questions
    - Interactions with extended family, respectful?
    - Where are they heading? goals, dreams, desires.
    - What are they doing to get to their goals?
    - Do they attend church?
    - Are you in agreement with the teachings of their church?
    - What are their financial goals?
    - How many kids do they want?
    - Where do they want to live?

3. Direction/Connection that leads to Marriage

   - Transparency is necessary.
   - More intimate questions,
   - Talk about marriage, engagement, sexual past, merging money, roles as husband and wife

4. Last Step - Engagement level

   - Your close level of influences (relationships) should be in favor. If they are not there is a red flag.
   - Recommend 6 months or less engagement. Why prolong this?
   - Get good pre-marriage teaching/guidance (Marriage Basics is offered on our website)
   - Prepare for the wedding (1 day), but continue preparing for marriage (lifetime)
   - Stating your vows is a spiritual transition- 2 become 1
   - Leave and cleave - Genesis 2:24 “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”

General Guidelines:

As the relationship grows, so should the level of emotional depth (Do not awaken your heart before its time – Song of Solomon).

Continue doing things with groups, family, etc. Do not be exclusive.

Keep **boundaries (rails on the ladder)** to protect the relationship. No sex, limit physical connection by treating each other in holiness; even depth of expression or prayer to appropriate level.

Honor the process.

Habakkuk 2:2 “And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it.”