

**ECCLESIASTES SERIES FIVE**  
**A TIME TO DANCE: DANCING WITH THE BAPTISTS**  
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**ECCLESIASTES 3 AND SELECTED PASSAGES**  
**S-1722**

**JULIE**

**SLIDE:** In marriage and in life, timing is everything. To the best of our ability, we'd like to demonstrate this concept for you this morning. We would have liked to call this sermon dancing with the stars, but when you see our skill level, we resorted to calling this "Dancing with the Baptists."

Many of us are living our relationships out of sync.

Many couples live their married lives fighting for control. It might look something like this" Tango-"My way, we'll do it my way....""No, my way we'll do it my way."

Some of us live our relationships like a sleepy two-step. We never work on our marriage, we never spice it up, or try to grow. I call this the "Middle School Sway."  
Two-step-(snoring) "Only You"

Often, we just spend our time stepping on each other's toes. Nagging, griping, snipping and arguing. It might look something like this:

(Stepping on each other's toes "These boots are made for walking."

After a while, we just give up trying to get along, and basically live under the same roof, doing our own thing. We ignore each other.

Dancing apart-60's style to "Twist and Shout."

When we live in sync-we feel the rhythm of our partner. We agree to move as one according to a plan, and we enjoy the feeling of holding each other closely.

(Dance a typical ballroom dance.)

Learning to dance together is hard work. But it can bring such joy and fulfillment to our lives. Let's take just a moment this morning and talk about how we can learn to live in sync.

**ROGER**

Engaged in Study in Ecclesiastes

**SLIDE:** When We Think About Marriage, Solomon Did Not Dance Well. His Timing Was Off.

He wrote Song of Solomon in his early years as a love letter to his first wife.

By mid life Solomon was enjoying a great relationship with his wife.

**SLIDE:** Proverbs 5:15-18: Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.

**SLIDE :** This is the way God planned it: "One woman for one man for a lifetime."

**SLIDE:** Proverbs 18:22: “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.”

But, sometime thereafter he stopped dancing with his wife. He began dancing with every woman at the party  
He never had a satisfying relationship with women again!

### **JULIE**

**SLIDE:** ECCLESIASTES 2:8-9: I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well — the delights of the heart of man.

Harem was the key: No longer dancing with God’s plan for their marriage—too many women!

Listen to this sad statement:

**SLIDE:** ECCLESIASTES 7:28: while I was still searching but not finding — I found one [upright] man among a thousand, but not one [upright] woman among them all.

He danced with one too many. He lost the wife of his youth—and his love for any.

### **ROGER**

**SLIDE:** In his dealings with women, Solomon changed from a lover to a loser—no woman in her right mind would want him as a husband as he got older.

Solomon reminds me of the husband who came home drunk every night and fell into bed fully clothed, passed out, and snored loudly all night long.  
His wife was losing much sleep because of his snoring. She went to her doctor and said, “Doc, I can’t take it any longer. How can I make him stop snoring? The doctor said that the answer was so simple that he wouldn’t even charge her.  
The next time her husband passed out, and started to snore she was to take a ribbon and tie it around his nose, and the snoring would stop.  
That night her husband came in fell on the bed, fully dressed, passed out and snored.  
The wife got up, pulled a blue ribbon from her dresser, and tied it around his nose. Sure enough, the snoring stopped and she got a restful night’s sleep.  
Next morning, the wife, fully refreshed, was preparing breakfast. She asked her husband, as he was awakening, “Honey, where were you last night?  
The husband, still fully clothed, looked in the mirror, saw the blue ribbon around his nose, and replied, “I don’t know but wherever I was, I won first prize.”

In truth, Solomon lost his most precious prize: he lost the wife of his youth.

### **JULIE**

After all his escapades, here is Solomon’s conclusion.

**SLIDE:** ECCLESIASTES 9:9: “Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love ....”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 is an overview of the poem and calls attention to the stages of life.

**SLIDE:** ECCLESIASTES 3: 1: There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under

heaven: *A time to be born, a time to die.*

In the stages of a relationship, there are beauties and blessings no matter what your stage of life. In marriage, God intended for every day of our lives to be sweeter.

**SLIDE:** In the honeymoon stage, my stomach got butterflies when he looked at me. Every time the phone rang, I wished it were his voice. I thought he was the sexiest man alive. Now I know better!

**SLIDE:** Then came the kiddie years. What joy holding those babies together was for us. We remember all the birthday parties. Bronwyn was born in November, so we'd buy the leftover Halloween costumes (the non-scary ones) and have a dress-up party complete with chubby bunnies and sack races.

Roger called those years the golden years. I called them the lead years.

**SLIDE:** My favorite stage was the teenage years with our girls. Here's our favorite river-rafting trip with our teenagers.

**SLIDE:** In the middle years we've had some great fun while the kids are grown. We loved backpacking through Europe, hopping trains and climbing Alps.

**SLIDE:** Now we finish each other's sentences, and order the same thing at restaurants. Here's a photo of teaching in Turkey last month. We do more things together now than we ever have.

## **ROGER**

**SLIDE:** Graph of Marital Happiness.  
Important to know where we are on the graph.

"A time to be born—and a time to die." And that moment of separation is hard.

STORY: Paul's wife in hospital. I just want to die.....and see Paul....."

Julie and I plan to meet each other at the Eastern Gate in heaven.

This Passage Is Hebrew Poetry. Approach Its Shades Or Meanings—Nuances and hues:  
Antithetical Hebrew Poetry: contrasts opposites

Let's look at it today from a relationship and marriage perspective.

## **JULIE**

**SLIDE:** A MARRIAGE IS A RELATIONSHIP WHICH IS CULTIVATED OVER TIME.

**SLIDE:** *A time to plant and a time to uproot*  
*A time to tear down and a time to build,*  
*A time to keep and a time to throw away*  
*A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them*

**SLIDE:** Marriage is not like building a house. It is more like nurturing a tree.  
It needs water, fertilizer and sun.

HOW HAVE WE CULTIVATED OUR RELATIONSHIP?

Spiritual preparation Some of the things that deepened our love were studying Proverbs and Romans together-even when we were apart, we would keep our Bible study going by letters. Roger and I started pastoring our first church before we married when he was 20 and I was 18. There is not a time in our lives that we were not in ministry together-and we are so grateful.

**ROGER:**

We have carefully based our marriage on Biblical principles.

**SLIDE:** 80% of people who live together before marriage get a divorce.

60% of people who get married by a justice of the peace get a divorce.

40% of those who are married in the church get a divorce.

For those who read their Bible together every day the divorce rate is 1 in 1051.

God has a marriage plan carefully outlined in Scriptures: It begins in Genesis two where God says, "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a partner for him...."

All the way to Revelation 5 where Jesus Christ demonstrates what an ideal husband might look like!

Ephesians 5: I want to love Julie as Christ loved His church. He gave His life for the church. He took a towel and washed their feet.

Two weeks after marriage. Thursday afternoon off. Deciding what to do together when the phone rang: My Dad, "Let's go play golf." We played together every Thursday and Saturday. "OK, I'll meet you in 20 minutes."

Turned around and tears were streaming down Julie's cheeks.

Learned a powerful lesson of love that day. Called my dad, "Sorry, not today. Let's plan for another day this week."

My goal is to meet her needs first. I am not free to do my own thing until I know that her needs are met.

**JULIE**

If relationships are not carefully cultivated, they sour over time.

The first year the husband says, "Honey, I worried about my little baby girl. You've got a bad sniffle. I want to put you in the hospital for a complete check-up. I know hospital food is lousy, so I'll arrange for Macaroni Grill to send your meals up."

The second year: "listen, honey, I don't like the sound of that cough. I've called Dr. Miller and he's going to rush right over."

Third year: "Maybe you'd better lie down, honey. I'll make some soup."

Fourth year: "Look, dear. Be sensible. After you've fed the kids and washed the dishes, you'd better hit the sack."

Fifth year: "Why don't you just gargle, or something instead of just sitting around barking like a seal. And stop sneezing. What do you want to do, give me pneumonia?"

**ROGER**

**SLIDE: MARRIAGE IS DEVELOPING SENSITIVITY TO OTHERS**

**SLIDE:** *A time to weep and a time to laugh*

*A time to mourn and a time to dance  
A time to embrace and a time to refrain  
A time to be silent and a time to speak*

Guys need to be sensitive. There is a time to be silent and a time to speak  
I wanted to compliment my wife when she came home from the beauty shop, so I said, “Hey Babe,  
what’s up with you’re hair.

I met a pastor-husband last week who gave his wife a bathroom scale and a set of hand weights for  
her birthday. I think he had a death wish.

## **JULIE**

Notice that men and women are different.

Men and women go on an overnight retreat. They’re so very different. What is the first question men  
ask when they arrive? “What for dinner? Is it meat?” What is the first question women want  
answered? “Where is the bathroom.”

♥**SLIDE:** Dr. Willard Harley has written a fascinating book entitled *His Needs/Her Needs*.

Five Major Needs of Woman

1. Affection
2. Conversation
3. Honesty and Openness
4. Financial support
5. Family Commitment

Five Major Needs of Men

1. Sexual Fulfillment
2. Recreational Companionship
3. An attractive spouse
4. Domestic support
5. Admiration

Not one of the top five is the same.

*Let’s just take the top two of the women’s needs and the top one of the man’s needs.*

*A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.* Solomon is talking about the different  
wiring men and women have. Men and women approach sex in a very different way.

**SLIDE:** *Kelly, time this next slide carefully. After Julie makes her last statement, pause for a moment  
and then show this slide.)*

**SLIDE:** Embracing and Refraining—This is the first woman in the Bible who said, “I have a  
headache.”

Wives, we need to be sensitive to the sexual needs of our husbands, but hubbies, here’s a word for  
you.

Solomon describes his lovemaking in the Song of Solomon: Several times he says, “Do not stir up  
love until it pleases.” Then he spends three chapters complimenting and praising her. He is not  
in a hurry.

Unfortunately too many husbands today practice drive-by sex—“bodda bing, bodda boom. Then he  
follows it up with: “Honey, is there any more Rocky Road in the frig?”

Ladies, we’re not much better. Think about how we keep—or don’t keep romance alive by our choice  
of night wear.

The first five years, you’re ordering those tiny fur and sequined little numbers from Victoria’s Secret.  
The second ten years you the after Christmas sales and buy P.J.’s with flannel and flowers, complete  
with the smell of baby poo and formula.

The next ten years you wear the U of A jersey you found on the clearance rack at Walmart.  
And finally, you put on your husband’s holey undershirts just before they become dust rags.

Not Solomon—after three chapters of describing to her his love and her beauty. He begins to undress her in chapter four and she’s wearing the right stuff. In the area of sex, this can help keep the romance alive.

## **ROGER**

Sensitivity means that we have cultivated the art of reading the feelings and emotions of people around us.

Learn to read:

**SLIDE**: Chart: Behaviors—Feelings—Needs

**SLIDE**: Ephesians 4:29-30: “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs , that it may benefit those who listen.” Behaviors—Feelings—Needs

Julie has carefully cultivated the skill of losing everything of importance at one time or other in her life—some things multiple times. This is behavior!  
I remember one time that her keys were at Burger King, her cell phone was at Albertsons and her purse was in Houston.

**SLIDE**: I hated this useless behavior. I used to get so angry at her.

Then I began to look a little deeper. Physically we discovered that she was bipolar and it was causing all sorts of difficulties in her life. Her mind was going so fast that it was hard to focus on any one thing. It is hard to keep up with a purse when your mind is thinking about 10 to 15 different things all at the same time.

How is she feeling: miserable, incompetent, criticized, condemned, unloved, worthless?

She needed Love, attention, understanding, acceptance.

I stopped yelling at her behavior and began focusing on her feelings and needs.  
She needed my support—not my raised voice.

## **JULIE**

When you think about the things that irritate you about your spouse—the things you’d like to change, the dirty socks, the morning breath, the shopping sprees, remember this word from Solomon:

**SLIDE**: “Enjoy your wife while you have her, for life is a mist.”

Jim McClure told me a story about Donna just after she died. He said, “early in our marriage, I heard God say very clearly- ‘Cherish her while you have her. She won’t be with you forever.’”

## **ROGER’**

**SLIDE**: I am going to take a moment and do something I hope you’ll do this Valentine’s Day—tell your spouse how much you love her!

I loved you at first sight. You burst through the church door thirty minutes late, went right to the piano and sang like an angel, then turned and sat down. I knew in my soul our hearts would grow old together—forever.

I love your open heart and revelation of the Lord Jesus inside. I knew in that moment we were on the same page and could be one for all time.

I love your spiritual soul... your servant's heart ... the care you give me, our girls and their husbands, for other all around and for the soul of our church.

The truth is, I love the essence of who you are—your wisdom, faithfulness, support, sensitivity, strength, grace, mercy, encouragement and compassion.

I love to sit in our blue chairs and share our hearts, and look into your eyes, and smell your perfume and hold your hand. I love your lips turned up in a smile and your voice as you sing with the skill and grace of an angel

I love that we share our hurts and fears and hopes and dreams as very best friends.

I love you for sharing those moments of quiet peace when nothing more needs be said.

I love you for holding me so close that I will never forget the feeling of embracing the one person with whom I have shared my very soul.

I love you for the closeness of intimacy that we share with each other alone.

I love you for choosing me to be the one you meet at the Eastern Gate.

I really do love you. Roger The PPPP