

Church Leaders

Casually Texting Single Sisters?

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

Question: Ok, here's the second question. This comes from Mariah. Now, look, some of these you say, "really? I mean, isn't the answer obvious?" But you'd be amazed pastorally how often we have to deal with questions that might seem obvious. Mariah: "Is it ok for married brothers..." (so we've got married Christians, men) "...in leadership positions - pastors, elders, deacons, etc. - to casually text or email single sisters? Why or why not? Are there any exceptions?"

Discussion:

Tim: I'm not sure why Mariah would ask this, but... I can imagine if a young lady, newly saved, in a church, she hears that some of her friends are receiving casual texts from church officers who are married. Is that reason for alarm? For concern? You raise your eyebrows? If it was happening in this church would it just be normal, normative, ok? I mean, you know what came to my mind, is she ought to go ask those men's wives. Right? I mean, ladies, come on. I think most of the ladies in here are single. But ladies if you were married to a church officer and your husband... now did you notice the adjective? "Casually texting." I text with certain sisters in the church - not casually - because it's easier than a phone call.

But casually, ladies, would you be ok with that? Or would you say there are exceptions? There would be times it would be ok. But just to find out, if you found your husband's phone... maybe getting ready to do laundry, empty his pockets, hey, there's his phone, and you see, well, he's texting single sisters in the church casually. Are you ok with that? Grace, you ok with that? Or does it depend? Is everybody ok with it?

(from the room) No!

Tim: Emotional attachment? Is there a text in the Bible that says, "Thou shalt not text single women." Of course not.

(from the room) How would she feel if she was married and someone was doing that?

Tim: Right. That would be very appropriate to put that back in her lap. But she doesn't say if she's single or not. So I don't know - she may actually be the wife of one of the guys, I'm not sure. There's not enough detail there for me to know. But we know this, just a couple texts: Matthew 15:19, "Out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person." Or if you think of 1 Cor 6:18, "Flee from sexual immorality."

Here's a thing, let's just think about this, Men in ministry fall all the time. All the time. It happens a lot. Single, young ladies are vulnerable. And the thing is are we really ignorant as to how infidelity happens? We're not. It's like James is talking about. There are the guys that they prey on women. They get in places of power and they prey on them. Their idea right up front is - there's no restraint. But I have a feeling that a lot of the men that fall, they never thought they would. They did not start out intending to.

How does infidelity happen when at first there is no intention to it? It doesn't happen like that. It happens by staging, by degrees, by steps. And what happens? Well, sexual immorality is a matter of the heart. What happens is the heart gets involved, the affections, the emotions. And how does it happen? Well, through communication. Certainly through communication. And what happens is that there's communication that goes back and forth. And we're not ignorant about this. And the thing is if you're in ministry, you're especially going to be a target of the devil, and it's just casual. That's the thing. It's dangerous. It's dangerous. And it's private. You end up having private communication with a woman who's not your wife when you do have a wife, and that's exactly the kind of communication where suddenly the hook goes in the heart. It's just that kind of communication. I'm not saying that it always leads to that. But certainly the men that fall, they were certainly doing things just like this. And if we're supposed to flee from this, we need to run from it like you'd run from Catholicism like the plague, you need to run from these kind of things. We need to be very careful. Because the moment we get presumptuous and say, "Well, I can play with that fire and it's not going to burn me," that's the second God - you may even be a true child of God, and God may allow you, like David, to fall flat on your face, and it can just destroy your life, your marriage, your family, your ministry for sure.