

The first time Ben asked Julie for a date, she said no. Well, this happened after the first time too. Last night people couldn't agree whether Julie said no ten times or twenty times. The rest of the family, though, took a liking to Ben right away. The Turners are grateful that a family as gracious as the Keeches would open their arms to the likes of us.

Actually, Turner family members have worked for causes like social services, battered women, anti-drug abuse, the injured, the county, the city, and the church. Ben and Julie met each other at a workplace dedicated to the cause of a hardy breakfast. They've been dedicated to their education: Ben will soon finish his degree, and Julie has been named Avila college's outstanding graduate in the field of education this year. But they have not let their education get in the way of pursuing interests like softball and golf -- not real sports like baseball, but diverting forms of amusement, nonetheless.

One piece of advice they give people in sports applies to much of life as well. Learn the fundamentals. If you do the fundamentals well, good things will happen. If you can throw, catch, hit, hit for power, and run (--the five tools of baseball--), good things will happen, even without giving it much thought. First Watch seemed like a good place to work -- fundamentally a good decision. You don't always know where a decision like that will lead, but if you learn the fundamentals of good decision-making, good things will happen. If you learn the fundamentals of family life, good things will happen. Both of you know that firsthand from the families you have.

St. Paul wanted the early church to learn the fundamentals as well. Christians in Corinth had a lot of problems. They bickered about their leaders. They misbehaved at eucharist. They didn't share their food with the hungry. It was a mess. Paul said to them, "You gotta get back to fundamentals. And the most fundamental part of being a Christian is love. You must be patient, kind, never rude, not self-seeking. If you learn the fundamental of love, you will not be prone to anger. You will not brood over injuries. Good things will happen." In ancient Corinth, you might say that God asked to date the people, God offered to love them, but the people kept saying no -- ten times, twenty times, 3,154 times or more. They kept refusing opportunities for love.

Ben and Julie, you've received a powerful example of love from your parents. You have experienced love for each other like never before. All that love comes first from God, who loved you even before you discovered love. My prayer for you today is that you return the love you receive. Don't refuse the opportunities to share it. May it benefit yourselves, your family, your church, and your community. Love never fails.