

BIBLICAL DATING: GROWTH & ENGAGEMENT

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Stages of a Dating Relationship

1. Friendship
2. Initiation
3. **Growth**
4. **Engagement**
5. Marriage

Growth

1. Growing & Guarding

2. Commitment & Intimacy
 - a. Commitment precedes intimacy

 - b. Communicate clearly about the level of commitment (with words AND actions)

 - c. Don't try to manipulate commitment by offering increased intimacy

 - d. Sexual intimacy is a whole package

 - e. How much intimacy is needed before committing to marriage?

3. Counsel & Accountability (vs. Isolation)

- a. Questions to ask:
 - i. Who knows about your relationship?
 - ii. Who understands the level of commitment involved in your relationship?
 - iii. Who have you asked for counsel on whether your relationship is a good idea?
 - iv. Who have you asked whether they see anything concerning about your relationship?
 - v. Who have you asked to keep you accountable regarding the details of your relationship?
- b. Counsel needs to be weighed
- c. Pursuit of isolation is often an indication of catering to sinful desire

4. Biblical Manhood & Womanhood

- a. Men
 - i. Take on burden-bearing, servant-hearted leadership and initiative . . . but remember you are not yet her spiritual head.
 - ii. Take the lead in seeking to protect her . . . especially from yourself.
- b. Women
 - i. Encourage and make room for a man to exercise initiative . . . and be patient with him.
 - ii. Cultivate godliness and inward beauty . . . and be modest.

Engagement

1. Questions to Ask Before You Get Engaged¹

- a. Is your relationship centered on God and His glory?
- b. Are you growing in friendship, communication, fellowship, and romance?
- c. Are you clear on your biblical roles as man and woman?
- d. Are other people supportive of your relationship?
- e. Is sexual desire playing too big (or too small) a part in your decision?
- f. Do you have a track record of solving problems biblically?
- g. Are you heading in the same direction in life?
- h. Have you taken into account any cultural differences you have?
- i. Do either of you have complicating entanglements from past marriages or relationships?
- j. Do you want to marry this person?

¹Taken from Joshua Harris, *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*, new ed. (Multnomah, 2005), 197-205.

2. How Do I Know If This is “the One”?

3. You are Not Married Yet!

4. Pre-marital Counseling

Recommended Resources:

Harris, Joshua. *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*. New ed. Multnomah, 2005.

Holland, Rick. “The Guided Path.” In *Five Paths to the Love of Your Life: Defining Your Dating Style*. Ed. Alex Chediak. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005.

Phillips, Richard D., and Shannon L. Phillips. *Holding Hands, Holding Hearts: Recovering a Biblical View of Christian Dating*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006.

“Singleness & Courtship.” Core Seminar, Capitol Hill Baptist Church. Accessed at www.capitolhillbaptist.org/we-equip/adults/core-seminars/singleness-courtship.

Watters, Candice, ed. *A Girl’s Guide to Marrying Well*. Accessed at www.boundless.org/girls.

Watters, Steve, ed. *A Guy’s Guide to Marrying Well*. Accessed at www.boundless.org/guys.