

Christian Courtship Concepts

Godly marriages that last a lifetime are becoming scarce in the world. As a godly people we are concerned that the youth growing up in our homes find godly life companions and establish homes on the solid foundation of the Word of God. Courtship is an important time of finding God's will for marriage.

Before beginning courtship, youth should establish a strong relationship with God. They need to know the joy of salvation. They should learn the blessing of worshiping their Creator God. Bible reading and prayer should become daily routines.

Youth should also build good relationships with their parents. While parents bear a lot of responsibility for this, youth have a part to play to connect with their parents in openness. They should choose to love, respect, and appreciate their parents. They should value their parents' experience and wisdom. They should seek parental advice before courting.

Good habits should be established in youth. Learning to work, to save money, to be on time, and to be sociable should be accomplished before considering courtship. Self-control, along with temperance, must be learned.

Young people should also consider voluntary service opportunities. Many good life skills are learned through mission work, teaching school, helping busy mothers, and helping in relief work. Youth should learn sacrificial giving. Having a good job but giving a hefty portion to the church is a healthy discipline. Choosing to spend less on ourselves and more on God's kingdom yields bountiful blessings and honors God above self!

Youth should seek God's face as they consider the questions of courtship. Who? When? How should I approach this? Prayer needs to be a priority. Consider Abraham's servant as he prayed for God's direction to find a wife for Isaac. God blessed and prospered that effort. Youth should not pursue companionship based on feelings or good looks.

We should also remember that the purpose of courtship is to find a life companion. It is not just a party, a fun time, or a social status to enjoy. Its purpose is to find the will of God for our lives. Part of this is to understand whether this relationship will work in harmony for years to come. Is there enough commonality of goals, aspirations, and convictions?

There are two extremes that can be taken on the subject of courtship. One is the practice of "dating around" until you find the right match for you. The other is the idea

that when a couple starts dating, something is really wrong if they break up. Young men are under pressure to make certain this courtship will go before beginning. There is a balance needed where careful consideration precedes a courtship, but the door is left open for dissolving the friendship if it seems wise to the couple. We should be respectful of courting couples who are finding their way, and avoid gossip and supposition. The couples have parents and ministry to lean on for help and counsel.

Wise is the couple that starts slow and thinks deeply about what they are doing. Time between dates is so very important to think and evaluate the relationship. Seeing each other too often and communicating each day will tend to feed fascination with each other and hinder meditative contemplation on the serious questions of courtship.

Courting couples should remember the important things of life. They should find a time for Bible reading and prayer together on each date. They should go to church together, visit relatives, and participate in evangelism efforts. They should seek to understand the heart of their friend. A young man should learn to know his girlfriend's mother, and likewise the girl should learn to know her boyfriend's father. This is one way to understand who has been molding your friend, and what your friend could become in later years. It is true that children can make choices that are different than those their parents have made. But patterns tend to reproduce themselves.

Couples need to have a covenant of purity between themselves. A "hands-off" policy is very necessary. They need to understand that a little compromise will lead to great compromise. Impurity is like a sliding board ride to the bottom with no convenient place to stop! Couples should seek to avoid places of undue temptation, where the mind will be tempted to sin. They should be careful about being alone late at night together. They should avoid parked car and empty house dates, and spend time together in one of their homes, where the family is present.

Parents should help youth consider their courting plans. They understand the temptations of youth and should help youth make wise choices about what they do when they are together.

Communication is another important part of courtship. Sharing about family life and values is important. Understanding each other's spiritual interests and insights is a must. Learning about each other's habits with earning and saving money should be a part of courtship. Couples should seek to understand what they want to have in their homes, not just what they don't want.

Courting couples should not ignore their circle of friends. Only having time for their "date" and always wanting time alone is not wise. Learning to know the friends of the one you are courting will also tell you something about the character of the one you are dating.

Engagement should be a time of commitment. It should be entered prayerfully and with deep commitment to a lasting marriage. It is a time to plan for a godly wedding. Couples begin to think about setting up housekeeping and planning a wedding trip.

Youth should be careful, early in courtship, to find themselves at rest with their friend. If this rest is not present, it may be wise to break up the friendship or put it on hold. Breaking up a courtship after courting for a long time, or breaking up after engagement, should be very rare and only with counsel from parents and ministry.

Couples should seek to honor their parents' wishes for their wedding, and should keep the church's standards in all their plans. The urge to have a unique wedding often prompts couples to step outside the boundaries of acceptable wedding practices. A marriage founded on the rock of Christ Jesus will be marked by Bible simplicity and obedience.

Remember, courting couples, you will look back and remember these days for many years if the Lord carries and blesses you with life. Be careful today to forge precious memories of lasting values. Keeping a long range view will help you make better choices in your courtship. What a treasure to hold memories of a pure, God-honoring courtship with no regrets! What joy to be able to tell your children of your youthful days serving God together!

~Luke Bennetch