

# SINGLENES AND DATING FOR MEN

As disciples of Jesus, we want to honor Him in every part of our lives, including our dating relationships. God's word gives us design and wisdom on how dating can be done in a God-glorifying way. Countless people have experienced the heartache and pain of dating relationships gone wrong. Typically, pain comes when we go away from God's design for dating, ending up in a relationship with the wrong person, or taking the relationship to a place God has not ordained. Let's look at some biblical wisdom on dating.

## The Art of Courtship

*(adapted from Tommy Nelson Song of Solomon series)*

God's word shows us how to date in a way that honors Him and dating that prepares us for a lifelong intimate marriage. The art of courtship is about connecting to someone emotionally without crossing physical barriers that God has ordained.

*Read Song of Solomon 2:1-4*

### Special Treatment

*v. 1-2 "I am the rose of Sharon, The lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns, So is my darling among maidens."*

When courting a woman, a man should strive to make her feel special and unique. With his words and actions, he should help her feel secure as though she were the only one that he gives his attention to. A man should never speak down to a woman with insults or belittlement.

v. 3 *“Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shade I took great delight and sat down, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”*

Taking delight and rest in someone’s shade is a sense of protection. When courting a woman, a man should strive to make her feel protected. She should never fear physical or verbal abuse from him. She should never feel forced to do something physically that would contradict her morality or the word of God. A man should strive to protect a woman’s heart from immorality and exploitations of the world.

A great way to be a protector in addition to treating women with gentleness is to pray for their godliness and maturity in the faith.

v. 4 *“He has brought me to his banquet hall, And his banner over me is love.”*

A banquet hall is a public place and a banner is a proud display of commitment and devotion. When courting a woman, a man should make her feel shown off in public. In other words, they are not ashamed to let everyone know that they are committed to her.

Discuss: What are some ways you could make a woman feel secure in a relationship?

*Read Song of Solomon 2:5-7; 2:16-3:5*

## **Healthy Physical Boundaries**

v. 5-6 *“sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, because I am lovesick.” “Let his left hand be under my head And his right hand embrace me.”*

These comments are made by someone who has been aroused sexually. Sexual attraction is a good thing that has been given to us by God. God designed sex and He designed it to be enjoyable and desired. However, it should be controlled and only enjoyed at the proper time (a marriage union).

*v. 7 "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds*

*of the field, that you do not arouse or awaken my love until she pleases."*

"Do not awaken my love until she pleases" is a way of saying we will not have a sexual relationship until marriage. When courting a woman, a man should do all that he can to keep her from the temptation of falling into sexual sin. He should strive to lead the relationship in a commitment to sexual purity. (1 Cor. 6:18-20) The sexual barriers usually go as the man goes. A woman will usually follow the man's lead on sex and most likely will love that he honors her body and soul enough to set boundaries.

Consider boundaries like, "We won't spend the night with each other," "We won't live together before marriage," "We won't spend significant amounts of alone time in vulnerable situations."

Discuss: How do sexual boundaries counter to our culture, but align with the kingdom of Christ?

How would you communicate sexual purity if asked by someone who doesn't understand your views?

*Read Song of Solomon 2:8-15*

## **Romance and Levels of Communication**

*v. 11-12a "For behold the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have already appeared in the land; The time has arrived for pruning the vines,..."*

This verse describes the time of Spring, where things are fresh and lively. When courting a woman, a man should strive to be romantic, having a

sense of spontaneity and fresh creative ways to show interest in her. Good courtship is an ever-changing romance. Be creative in ways that you spend time together, be spontaneous in ways that let her know you are thinking of her, go the extra mile to “wait” on her and serve her during a date.

Discuss: What is the most spontaneous thing you’ve ever done to show appreciation for a woman?

*v. 14 “O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret place of the steep pathway, let me see your form, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your form is lovely.”*

In this verse, the man is calling a shy reserved person to step out into depth of conversation and connection. Courtship is the time to begin learning how to communicate with one another in ways that will lead to intimacy even into marriage.

- Level 1 Communication - **Cliché** “what’s up?”...”not much”
- Level 2 Communication - **Information** “what’s up?”... “Studying for an important test I have on Friday”
- Level 3 Communication - **Feelings** “what’s up?”...”well I’m feeling really stressed about this test I’ve been studying for, I am anxious because I really need to do better than last time.”...”yeah, I understand, I will pray that God will help you focus, and that your anxiety leaves you.” Level 3 communication leads to deep connection. When you become a good question asker and good listener, you will be good at this level of communication.

## Personal application

What would it require for you to take the lead on setting sexual boundaries in your relationship?

What level communicator are you?

How could you grow deeper in connection?

