

Tonight _____

- Game
- Worship
- Teaching
- Snack

Announcements _____

- Walk for Life – May 6
- Parenting Class – *likely* date: April 15

Marriage: getting from here to there?

Goals for this discussion

- + Encourage discussions among teens, young adults, and parents about godly convictions
- + Encourage conversations between teens and their parents about preparing for marriage
- + Acknowledge that the Bible does not give ONE specific model for pre-marriage relationships
- + Identify biblical principles that guide and govern pre-marriage relationships
- + Work together within the church to help teens and young adults in our midst form godly convictions in this area

POINT NUMBER ONE

- + **Marriage is a gift from God.**

- + **Sex is a gift from God to be enjoyed within the marriage relationship.**

Why do we pursue close guy/girl relationships?

- + We desire to be known and loved for who we are
- + We desire to know others
- + We want to be chosen
- + We want to express our sexuality

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Don't look for your final happiness, worth, or identity in your status or relationships (this is idolatry)
 - + Phil. 4:11-12
 - + 1 Cor. 7:32-35
2. Do not awaken love until it pleases
 - + Song of Solomon 2:7

- + Wait to pursue romantic relationships until you can reasonably take that relationship toward marriage.
3. Reserve all sexual relations for marriage
 - + 1 Cor. 7:1-2
 - + 1 Tim. 5:1-2
 - + 1 Thess. 4:3-7
 - + Sexual *relations* are not limited to sexual intercourse. If an activity is sexual in nature, it is off-limits for persons who are not married.
 4. Do not defraud your brother (or sister)
 - + 1 Thess. 4:6
 - + Do not intentionally stir up desires (**romantic** or **sexual**) that cannot be fulfilled righteously.
 5. Welcome counsel, advice, and accountability
 - + The Book of Proverbs
 - + Invite input from friends, parents, pastors, older couples
 - + Realize that your parents can be particularly important in this journey. They know you.

WHAT'S NEXT: PROGRESSION TOWARD MARRIAGE



THREE MODELS:

A. The Culture's Model: Dating **Relationship**

- a. Goal: Be in a relationship
- b. Boyfriend/girlfriend
- c. Includes exclusive commitments
- d. Engage in romance
- e. Engage in physical/sexual activity

B. The **Courtship** Model (definitions vary)

- a. Goal: Purposeful movement toward marriage. I think this is the person I want to marry.
- b. Exclusive commitment
- c. Lots of parental involvement (guidance and permission)

d. Avoid physical/sexual activity

C. A Third Model: **Dating Friendships**

a. Goal: Get to know you to determine if you're a potential candidate for marriage

b. No demand for exclusive commitments

c. No pursuit of romance**

d. Avoid physical/sexual activity

e. Should include lots of parental (as well as other) advice and accountability

f. Could lead to courtship or to engagement

g. Dating is an activity, not a status

h. Advantage of getting to know someone outside group contexts

WHAT SHOULD I FOCUS ON RIGHT NOW?

- + Learn to be a good friend. Work at it.
 - Consider the good of the other person.
 - Show interest in what they care about.
 - Use the friendship to bless others (be outwardly focused).
- + Pay attention to what/who shapes your views on relationships, marriage, and sexuality.
 - Media (music, movies, tv)
 - Culture
 - Peer pressure
 - Personal desires and lusts
- + Realize that it's impossible to remove all risks in relationships.
 - Avoiding romance and physical/sexual interactions reduces risk.
 - But, there are still risks in any genuine relationship.
 - Being sinned against
 - Being rejected in some way
 - Different levels of commitment
- + Avoid ungodly flirting
 - Flirting and the dance of romance might eventually be a part of a dating friendship as it progresses toward engagement.

- But, flirting should not be the *default* way of interacting with the opposite sex. Be genuine.
- + Dress Modestly
 - Since our goals are to pursue purity in relationships, don't dress in ways that draw unnecessary attention to your sexuality.

OTHER QUESTIONS AND ADVICE

- + When should I consider spending time individually with someone of the opposite sex?
- + Once in a dating friendship, what can I do to avoid physical/sexual interaction, especially since I'm attracted to the other person? (pp. 93-95)
 - Get accountability
 - Avoid alone time
 - Be outward facing
 - Begin at the right time
 - Keep it short

Recommended resource:

- + *Sex, Dating, and Relationships* by Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas