

DATING FOR TEENS – PART 4

August 31, 2009

THE BIG IDEAS:

- Sexual intimacy is to be reserved for marriage.
- Men and women are equal but made for different roles.

SEXUALITY

Often, people tend to say one thing on the issue of sexuality and dating: don't have sex before marriage. While this is both true and biblical, there is more to this issue.

The marriage pattern given in Genesis is that one man and one woman make a marriage covenant before God, and only after this may they know each other. Therefore, in a dating relationship, one should consider not only "don't have sex before marriage", but also ask, What is an appropriate and wise level of intimacy before marriage? For some, this may even mean they save their first kiss for the wedding day.

Here are a few things to consider when deciding on an appropriate and wise level of physical intimacy in a dating relationship:

- 1 Thess. 5:22 Abstain from all *appearance* of evil.
- If your dating relationship breaks up, will you have robbed intimacy from your future spouse?
- How would you feel if your parents knew what you were doing?
- Am I honoring God's intentions for sexuality?

The Bible doesn't give a clear answer on what is acceptable behaviour, but it does give us principles and wisdom to make good decisions. It is usually better to err on the side of caution.

A good idea is to operate within what the Bible calls "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23). These "fruit" are traits that characterize mature Christians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. An individual who is operating in the fruit of the Spirit will make good decisions when it comes to sexuality in dating. Develop these fruit as a child (especially self-control) and you should have no problem remaining pure during dating.

HEADSHIP

Two views

1. Egalitarian – men and women are equal and can fulfill the same roles
2. Complimentarian – men and women are equal and fulfill different (but complimentary) roles

In today's society, and even among Christians, the Egalitarian view is easily the predominant viewpoint. However, the Bible says in many places that men are to lead the home...

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

Colossians 3:18-19 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

1 Peter 3:1-7 ¹Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ²when they see your respectful and pure conduct. ³Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— ⁴but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Ephesians 5:22-32 ²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

CLARIFYING HEADSHIP

Headship does not mean...

- That women are inferior to men
- That men can do whatever they want
- That a wife cannot have input or leadership in a family

Headship does mean...

- That all problems in the home are ultimately the man's responsibility (though not necessarily his fault)
- That the man must set the pace for the family (spiritually, relationally, financially etc.)
- That the man leads sacrificially just as Christ sacrificed himself for the Church.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

- Men, though leaders of the home, are still under the authority of Christ, the local church, and the government. Thus, a wife may go to higher authority if necessary to deal with her husband's sin.
- Most wives willingly and happily enter under the leadership of their husbands if he is subjected to Christ. In this type of scenario, headship is protective and a blessing rather than abusive and a curse.
- Jesus himself, though equal to God the Father, willingly subjected to the Father's leadership (1 Cor. 11:13). Women are modeling Christ-likeness by following the biblical principle of headship; men are modeling Christ-likeness by being a "living sacrifice".
- Headship only works if the husband is focused on his leading and the wife on her following. The focus should never be on how well the other is fulfilling their responsibility.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do I consider to be an appropriate and wise level of intimacy in dating? Does that hold up to biblical principles?
2. Am I developing in the fruit of the Spirit?
3. What misunderstandings do I have concerning headship?
4. For guys: Am I a man worth following? Am I mature enough to lead a family?
For gals: Am I seeking a husband worth following? Am I humble enough to submit to his leadership?
5. What purpose did God have in instituting gender roles?