

Courtship or Dating, Part 4: Purpose and Purity in Relationships

Pastor Phil Layton, Gold Country Baptist Church, Jan. 31, 2010 (www.goldcountrybaptist.org)

Introductory Observations of what God blessed in Ruth and Boaz's relationship:

1. Parental honor (Ruth 3:5-6, 17; God blesses Ruth's honoring of her only parental figure left)
2. Purposed towards marriage (3:9-10; note: no positive portrayal in Scripture of recreational relationships)
3. Pre-eminence of the LORD and His blessing (3:10)
4. Personal character attracts the godly (3:11; focus first on being the right person, not finding the right person)
5. Principles of God's Word govern relationship (3:12-13, 4:1-10)
6. Purity till marriage (4:13; saving its blessings till the covenant commitment)

Resources for Further Study:

Audio (GCBC website version of these notes have hyperlinks to online messages):

- Rick Gregory, "[Dating, Courting & Biblical Relationships for Young Adults](#)" (GCBC BUM Conference, 2009)
Rick Holland, "Ten Principles for a God-Centered Relationship" [Pt 1](#) and [Pt 2](#) (Grace Community, 9-2005)
Mitch Lush, "Dating & Courting Seminar" – very good and balanced [series](#) (Trinity Baptist Church in NJ 1999)
Jim Newheiser, "Courtship and Dating" [message](#) (Grace Bible Church, Escondido, CA)
Steve Fernandez, Parenting [series](#): "Principles of Biblical Dating" (Community Bible Church, Vallejo 2005)
Jeffrey Smith, "[A Biblical Approach to Dating](#)" (Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, South Carolina, 1998)

Print Bibliography (helpful contributions to the subject)

- Elisabeth Elliott, *Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ's Control* (Revell, 1984)
Josh Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye: A New Attitude Towards Romance and Relationships* (Multnomah 1997)
Josh Harris, *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship*, new edition (Multnomah, 2005)
Jim West, *Christian Courtship vs. the Dating Game* (Christian Worldview Ministries, 1993)
Douglas Wilson, *Her Hand in Marriage: Biblical Courtship in the Modern World* (Canon Press, 1997)
Rick Holland, "The Guided Path," in *Paths to the Love of Your Life*, edited by Alex Chediak (Think, 2005)
Rick Phillips, *Holding Hands, Holding Hearts: Recovering a Biblical View of Christian Dating* (P&R, 2006)
*see also excellent [online articles](#) by Capitol Hill Baptist Church, "Friendship, Courtship & Marriage"

Review of Definitions of Terms

Recreational Dating – 20th century Western cultural, casual, or recreational "going out," generally as follows:

- often begins among young, teen school-children nowhere near marriage and with no intent of marriage (up to 10 yrs or so before average marrying age) for fun, feelings, fulfilling youth's desires
- based largely on outward attraction, and if interest is mutual, the two may quickly skip friendship stage to boyfriend / girlfriend stage or "going steady" relationships which consume life, energies, focus, time (taking him/her away from family, serving, church, etc.), often idolatrously [see Col. 3:5]
- typically young adult to adulthood journey includes a series of romantic relationships with someone else's future spouse since most of these don't end in marriage [but see 1 Cor. 6:18-7:4]
- varying levels of emotional awakening and stirring of passions and feelings and giving of hearts and sharing intimate expressions verbally and eventually often physically (kissing, "making out," caressing, sometimes even further sexually) with consequences including significant emotional and spiritual toll upon the young people when relationships come to an end
- frequently seeks and savors some of the privileges of marriage without its covenant commitment or *agape* love that dies to self rather than pleases self, and seeks the other's best interest [Eph. 5:25-26]
- guided mostly by self, youth cultural norms and expectations, with little to no parental involvement, insight, oversight, approval or even advice sought early and during the relationship, though at least meeting and minimally interacting with father and family may occur, often after the couple already has progressed romantically, emotionally, perhaps even physically to some degree

- eventually when (if?) a young man settles down to commit to his serious girlfriend, and is at or near marriageable age and the next stage of life, he prepares to propose, and a girl's parents finally at this point may be informed of his intentions at the end of the process, asking at least for token approval
- with little to no input from godly mentors or church leaders sought previously, as the couple makes arrangements for the wedding, final plans include finding a pastor so they can get married, leaving a little time for premarital counseling as a formality since some pastors require it to perform a wedding

Christian Courtship or Dating Biblically – a mature relationship of man and woman both under the headship of Christ and the daughter ideally under the loving headship (provision, protection) of her father until given by him at a wedding, at which point her covenant headship and loving leadership is transferred to her husband:

1. **passionately in love above all else with God's Son**
2. **parentally involved among God's people**
3. **purposefully considering marriage for God's glory**
4. **principle driven by God's Word**
5. **purity guarding for God's best**

Some Key Scriptures on Purity:

Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5 (NIV) *Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: **Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.*** [i.e., stimulating or stirring up what God intended to be fulfilled at the proper time in marriage]

Romans 13:13-14 (NASB) *Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing ... not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality ... But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.***

2 Peter 1 (NASB) ³ *seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*** ⁴ *For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.***

Romans 12 (NIV) ¹ *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.* ² **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** *Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

1 Thessalonians 4 (NIV) ³ *It is **God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;*** ⁴ *that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,* ⁵ *not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;* ⁶ *and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.* ⁷ *For **God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*** ⁸ *Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

1. The Responsibility of Parents as Believers

- In God's Law, the father was held responsible for the purity of a daughter living in his house (Dt. 22:20-21)
- fathers teach children: guard your heart (Prov. 4:20-23) and eyes (4:25-27) and ears (5:1-4) and steps (5:5-14)
- both father and mother's wisdom and teaching is to protect from impurity and its consequences (6:20-33)
- a mother to her son on what to look for in a wife (Prov. 31; Naomi also counsels Ruth as 'my daughter')

2. The Responsibility of Other Believers

- Titus 2 models older believers instructing the younger of the same gender in purity, self-control, conduct, etc.
- The whole church should honor marriage (Heb 13:4) and hold its own accountable to God's standard (1 Cor 5)

3. The Responsibility of the Single Believer

- Follow the above Scriptures and flee as far and fast as you can from youthful lusts, with godly believers in your life for accountability (2 Tim. 2:22) so you can be more useful and pleasing to the Lord (v. 21)
- Some focus on 'abstinence' but Christians should focus on purity, not just from intercourse but from intimate touching (passionate kissing, caressing, etc.; see Gen. 26:8-9; 20:6; Ruth 2:9; Prov. 6:29; 1 Cor. 7:1-2) and anything stimulating lust (Mt. 5:27-30), to preserve the glory of marriage (Eph. 5:27, 2 Cor. 11:2, Rev 21:9-11)