

“A Good Recipe for Romance – Courtship”

What is courtship? Courtship is a relationship intended to build toward a healthy marriage. It is like dating because it involves a man and a woman, but unlike dating, it is based on responsibility. Courtship is based on understanding **COMMITMENT**.

1 Friendship First: When people jump right into a romantic relationship they don't see the person as they really are. Our vision gets clouded by emotions, and we often refuse to see things in that person that would immediately set up a red flag when we're in our right mind. *Get to know someone first as friends. Watch them in real life, dealing with real situations. Find out who that person really is. Would you even consider spending your life with that person???* If not... go no further. If so, consider taking the next step only after carefully waiting and praying for God's direction.

2. 4 GREENLIGHTS (From Joshua Harris's "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" Pg. 212 and 213)

Green Light #1: God's Word

Based on scripture is marriage right for you and the person?

Example from Scripture:

2 Cor. 6:14 NIVa

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

Is that person a Christian? Is their faith strong? If you marry them, and have kids w/ them... will your family live for and serve God.

Green Light #2: You're Ready for Marriage

Are you really ready to be a husband or wife? Are you spiritually mature and emotionally stable? Are you ready financially?

Green Light #3: Godly Counsel

(The Approval and Support of Your Parents or Guardians, Christian Mentors, and Godly Christian Friends...)

"If you think you're ready for marriage, but no one else who knows and loves you agrees, you should probably reconsider." Everyone may not agree, but you definitely want those Godly people you look up to in agreement. If someone you respects, who loves you, and loves God has reservations, take what they say seriously. Be open to Godly advice.

Proverbs 15:22 NIV

Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed.

Green Light #4: God's Peace

Col. 3:15 NIV

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Example: I actually ended a relationship and cancelled plans to go to a Technical School because I didn't have peace in my heart about it. At the time I was friends with Tara. Immediately after I cancelled my own plans... God began to show me His better plans. I have the amazing privilege of spending my life with Tara. She is more than I could ever ask for. If I hadn't followed the peace of Christ in my heart I would have missed God's best for me.

3. Define the Purpose of the Relationship: Pursuing Marriage

Guys, you're supposed to take the first step. When the time is right, you should have the courage to pursue that girl by beginning a courtship. Don't take it lightly. When beginning a courtship, it has a clear purpose. The purpose is to find out:

Are we or aren't we right for each other??? This takes boldness, and some certainty. You should never begin a courtship w/ someone you wouldn't consider marrying.

4. Guys -Respect Her Parents (or the Person Responsible for her). You need to respect them and earn their trust... because they are the ones that are responsible for her now. It's wise to ask her parent's permission before even asking her to consider courtship. That will help start your relationship w/ your future in-laws off on the right foot. It's a bold move to approach a girl's father and ask if you could spend time building a relationship w/ her in the hope of marriage. Young man, if you don't have the courage to face her father (or other leader) in that way, you have no business pursuing her. You aren't man enough for her...

5. Build the Relationship in "Real Life Settings"

This is where you seek to win each other's hearts. You seek to build your relationship, and find out more about each other. You grow in love for each other, while at the same time keeping away from tempting situations. Look for chances to include each other in everyday things. What do you like to do???

Do it together. Hang out. Spend time.

It's a good idea to have Godly boundaries set in place. Both of you can decide together early in the relationship what is ok, and what's not ok (example: Can we kiss, or is that something we're saving for marriage? Can we be alone in a car or room together?) Set up boundaries and stick to them... it will help to keep you from slipping into sin. (It's also a good idea to let your parents or Godly mentors help w/ planning boundaries.) When you are making these boundaries, use them as a tool to glorify God, they are not the end in themselves. You should be driven ultimately by your love for God and love and respect for the other person, to uphold purity.

When you're both sure that you're right for one another, it is time to "pop the question."

6. Save the Physical Stuff for Marriage

Physical purity isn't just "not having sex." It's a lot more than that. One thing leads to another when it comes to physical contact. We shouldn't "see how far we can go" and still keep from having sex. God wants us to set much higher standards.

Purity starts as a conviction of your heart. You believe that God called you to remain physically pure until marriage. Then it's important that you back up that belief by making choices constantly to avoid temptations.

You want to have a lasting relationship? You want to have a strong family, a home that stands firm... Then pursue romance God's way. Use wisdom, even in the midst of all the excitement and emotion of romance.

Proverbs 24:3 NIV

By **wisdom** a house is built,
and through understanding it is established...

Prayer: Lord I pray for your wisdom in relationships. Help me to remain pure. Help me to keep myself for you, and my future spouse. Lord, I pray that you would prepare me, so that when the time is right, I would be ready to pursue marriage. Help me to be strong in my faith, and in my convictions. And when the time is right I believe you'll lead me to the right person, and help me to pursue romance the right way... Amen.

Works Cited:

Much of this is quoted directly or indirectly borrowed from Joshua Harris's "I Kissed Dating Goodbye"

