

Christian Relationships

The Bible commands us to treat others in a Godlike manner. How are we to relate to and react to others, both friends and enemies, believers and unbelievers? What guidance does the Scripture give us in our relationships with the opposite sex? The most important relationship most of us will ever have is to be married and spend the rest of our life with one person. With all the pitfalls that exist in marriage, it is critical that we understand ourselves and what it means to be a friend first and then a spouse.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. (Proverbs 27:6)

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:35)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

1. What are examples of being “yoked with unbelievers” other than marriage?
 2. How do you “restore” someone who has stumbled?
 3. What is our goal in friendships and relationships?
 4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a and substitute your name each time the word “love” is printed. This is the kind of person you should be in front of others and this is the kind of husband or wife you should be.
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MEMORIZE: Ephesians 4:32

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Bottom Line Principles in Male/Female Relationships

Friendships

- A relationship between a man and a woman must begin as a friendship.
- The key to all relationships is communication.
- Communication can be verbal or non-verbal.
- About 80-90% of all communication is non-verbal.
- Women describe friendships in terms of feelings and relationships.
- Men describe friendships in terms of activities and accomplishments.

Dating and Courtship

- Three questions to ask yourself before you go on a date:
 - What am I trying to accomplish?
(Are my motives right?)
 - How am I going to accomplish those goals?
 - What are the boundaries I am setting ahead of time?
- On a date, are you more concerned about your own happiness or about focusing on the other person?
- God's plan for your life may be for you to be single. (*1 Corinthians 7:7-9*)
- True love is not a feeling; it is a commitment to wanting the best for another person, even at your own expense. (*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*)
- As a relationship develops, be careful to recognize the difference between love and physical attraction.
- Compatibility is never properly tested by living together.
 - No commitment = inability to fully trust the other person.
 - Wrong test = often viewed as mainly sexual compatibility.
 - People who live together before marriage have an 80% greater chance of divorce than those who didn't.
- The key in a relationship is to love and respect the other person rather than using them.

- In a relationship, we all need to establish no trespassing zones.
 - NTZ's could also be called the "I will not's!"
 - Everyone needs a set of godly standards for conduct.
 - Call them the "unshakable unbreakables."
- God designed physical contact between men and women to be progressive—it takes tremendous discipline to stop in the middle.
 - Holding hands can lead to kissing.
 - Kissing can lead to inappropriate touching.
 - Inappropriate touching can lead to a sexual relationship.
- Be very cautious of promises made during courtship.
- Be very cautious of personality and conduct changes observed during courtship and engagement.

Marriage

- Never marry someone with the thought that you can change them.
- Very often, marriages unite people with different temperaments.
 - One is a thinker and the other is a feeler
 - One is an extrovert and the other is an introvert
 - One is structured and the other is more free-flowing
 - One is intuitive and the other is sensing
 - One is judging and the other is perceiving
 - One is a night person and the other is a morning person
- The most frequent cause of marital conflict is money.
 - How to spend it
 - Saving and giving
 - Financial accountability to each other
- Marriage must be "ours," not "yours and mine."
- Marriage is forever; divorce is not an option.