

CHRISTIAN COURTSHIP, PART II

Last week we discussed the subject of attraction to the opposite sex. We pointed out that this is normal. When our children enter puberty and we see they are far more interested in the opposite sex, we can rest assured that in God's timing, things are progressing normally.

We want to move on to a more practical approach to the courtship process.

Trouble often comes when couples isolate. There are immediate problems we can foresee. First, there will be a tendency to get too serious too fast. The company of other people will keep the conversation from becoming too personal. It is the personal sharing that lends to a bonding relationship.

Secondly, there will be the increased atmosphere for sexual temptation. Remember, although attraction is normal, we don't need to feed the desire. *"Flee also youthful lusts..."* (II Timothy 2:22). The rule of thumb is not to feed, but rather to flee youthful lusts.

When a person is interested in courting a godly young person, he or she won't mind insisting on staying in crowds; they will appreciate your conscientiousness and effort to protect each other from a too intense bonding on one hand and an increased atmosphere of sexual temptation on the other hand. If they complain and object, it should be obvious that their intentions are leaning toward unrighteousness. This opens an even greater reason for restricting your being together to an open arena. You see, the last place you want to be is alone and the last person with whom you want to be alone is a wicked person with unholy designs. The Bible warns: *"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away"* (Proverbs 4:14, 15).

This principle is throughout the Scripture. It was when Joseph was trapped in a private setting as a young house servant that the temptress tried her best to seduce him. The Bible explains how the temptation came about: *"And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within"* (Genesis 39:11). The following verse says, *"And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me..."* (Genesis 39:12a). Joseph's response was, *"...and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out"* (Genesis 39:12b).

The Word of God tells how the young man may avoid the troubles of being with the wrong woman. Notice the words I've underlined in the Scripture; *"Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, **there** met him a woman with the attire of an*

harlot, and subtil of heart" (Proverbs 7: 8-10). Here is the example of a young person in the wrong place with the wrong person at the wrong time. It was "**there**", the place of "*the harlot*" and the one "*subtil (shrewd, captious) of heart*" met him.

I cannot emphasize this point strongly enough. It is often the area teenagers will fight hardest to win, i.e. the permission to be alone. Yet it is the area we need to fight hardest to protect. Please, Parent, don't cave in here. God will bless you. Remember, it is more important to be your children's dad and mom than their "buddy." The truth is, you're not being their friend if you help set them up for failure in this area.

I love you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

2003

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