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COURTSHIP

I. Courtship and dating are not Biblical words. Some distinguish between courtship and dating.

II. Cultural determinations of courtship process.

A. Hebrew society.

1. Mate selection
 - a. Families usually arranged - Gen. 21:1; 38:6
 - b. Groom sometimes selected, and had family arrange - Judges 14:2
 - c. Family sometimes sought consent of daughter - Gen. 24:58
 - d. Romantic attraction in mate selection - Gen. 29:20
2. Betrothal was as binding as marriage. Usually less than 1 year.
3. *Mohar*. Marriage present from groom to bride's family. Compensation for loss of daughter. Gen. 34:12; Exod. 22:16; I Sam. 18:25

B. Roman society

1. Mate selection usually arranged by families.
2. Betrothal as early as ages 5-7 for daughters. Marriage - 12-17.
3. Dowry. Bride's family pays husband's family or husband.

C. American society.

1. Mate selection by romantic attraction, dating process.
2. Adolescence. Early puberty and late marriage.

III. A Christian courtship process.

A. Discern commonality of spirits.

1. Is this person spiritually regenerated? John 3:1-6
2. Take time to observe their values and attitudes. (Matt. 7:16)
3. Will they pray with you? ...study Scripture? ...attend church?
4. Seek counsel of pastor or spiritual leader.

B. Determine correlation of minds.

1. Are there common interests?
2. Do you share "the mind which is in Christ Jesus?" (Phil. 2:5)
3. Is there common desire to "renew the mind?" (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23)

C. Discover concerns of emotions.

1. Don't start with "feelings;" these should be by-product.
2. Are your affections directed toward the highest well-being of the other person?

3. Do you detect anger, fear, jealousy, pride, etc.?
- D. Develop commitments of wills.
1. Are there common objectives and priorities?
 2. Discuss short-range and long-range goals. Career choices.
 3. Is there a mutual decision to follow God's leading together?
- E. Desire companionship of bodily presence.
1. Desire to share recreation, entertainment, social occasions in each other's company.
 2. Communication; communication; communication!
 3. Premarital sexual relationships are contrary to God's intent. (I Cor. 6:12-20).

IV. Fundamental realities of Christian marriage.

- A. Conjunction of spirits within God's divine oneness. (I Cor. 6:17; Malachi 2:15)
- B. Communications of minds within a context of considerate understanding. (I Peter 3:7)
- C. Connection of emotions within a context of compassionate love. (Eph. 5:25)
- D. Commitment of wills within a mutual covenant relationship. (Malachi 2:14)
- E. Consummation of bodies within a context of co-habitation. (I Cor. 7:3-5)

V. Learning to love.

- A. Love is NOT
1. Something you "fall into" - a black hole.
 2. Infatuation. Emotional loss of control. "Flipped out.." "Couldn't help myself." Romanticism and sentimentalism. "Puppy love." Boy-crazy; girl-crazy.
 3. Evaluating another by external criteria. "She's a #10"
 4. Selfish. Interested in "getting" to satisfy my needs.
 5. Taking advantage of another (age, height, weight, looks, intellect, emotional maturity, spiritual maturity, social standings, social skills, psychological understanding, place of authority, financial superiority, etc.)
 6. Improper need fulfillment. Need for love, acceptance, relating, bonding, belonging, to be valued, affirmed, excitement, identity, etc.
 7. Lust. Hormones. Lasciviousness, sensuality. "Let's get physical."
 8. Sex. "Making love."
 9. Idolatry. ".....is my life." Totally preoccupied in attention and time.
- B. Love is...
1. Respectful of the other person's values, standards and opinions.
 2. Unselfish and unconditional.
 3. A decision to relate to the other person at every level - spiritual, psychological and physical.
 4. Giving of oneself to the other.
 5. Responsible to seek the highest good of the other person "for better or for worse."
 6. God in action. (Rom. 5:5; I John 4:8,16)

VI. Physical limitations in courtship.

- A. Sexual intercourse is sin outside of context of marriage. (I Cor. 6:9; 17,18; II Tim. 2:22).
- B. Sublimation or suppression of temporal gratification for long-term benefit.
- C. Mutual determination of limits made before God. Love will not seek to go beyond.