**DATING**

1. How can expectations lead to struggles in a dating relationship?
2. Why is liking someone a necessary prerequisite to love?
3. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13:14 *“Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”* We noticed this couple felt the same passions any young man and woman would feel, yet they remained pure. What are some practical safeguards dating couples can implement to keep them pure?
4. If you are married with children, what are some practical ways you could teach these principles to your children before they get to the dating age?
5. Everyone has had bad dating experiences. What are some lessons you’ve learned from the dating school of hard knocks?

# SONG OF SOLOMON

DATING (1:9 – 2:7)

Dating can be the best of times and the worst of times. How many have been hurt by dating? Generally the biggest hurdle, for a guy, is getting up the nerve to ask the person out that you are attracted to. For the girl it is getting the guy to ask you out that you are attracted to.

The real purpose for dating is primarily for **observation** and **edification** between two people. In this section we will discuss the requirements for successful dating and what to expect. We will even address how to handle growing passion. Let’s look at the scriptural references for this section.

**ANNOTATION OF VERSES:** Song of Songs 1:9 – 2:7 (DATING)

(v9) *“I have compared you,* ***my love****, to my filly among Pharaoh’s chariots.”* He is gentle with her. The Hebrew for my love is ***rayah,*** meaning associate, companion or friend – it develops a strong connotation of commitment and delight and is used nine times in the Song of Songs.

Comparing her to a filly or mare among Pharaoh’s chariots speaks of her sexual attractiveness. After the middle of the second millennium B.C. mares were no longer used to pull the royal chariots, only stallions were used because the mares distracted the stallions.

(v10-11) “*Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments. Your neck with chains of gold. We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver.”* Solomon compliments her. He will provide silver and gold to compliment her natural charms. (He buys her gifts).

(v12) *“While the King is at his table, my spikenard* (perfume) *sends forth its fragrance.”* The couple eats together here and in (2:4). Her presence as a reality in his life surrounded him like a choice perfume.

(v13-14) “*A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me that lies all night between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyard of En Gedi*.” He edifies her, his memory is pleasant on her heart and he is sweet. The consciousness of him brought sensations as real and as delightful as the smell of myrrh and henna blossoms.

(v15-17) Solomon speaking “*Behold you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes.)* The Shulamite woman responds, “*Behold you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed (couch) is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir*.” This brief series of loving responses models communication and shows an inherent dialogue of love. We see here physical attraction which is only spoken of after they have established their spiritual and social foundation. There is proprietary – they are out in the open.

(2:1) *“I am the Rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.* She grows in her perception of herself (esteem) as compared to 1:5 where she stated that she was black due to the sun from working in the vineyards. He makes her feel beautiful.

(2:2) *“Like a lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters.”* He doesn’t lead her on and go from one girl to the next – there is trust and a desire to commit.

(2:3) “*Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste*.” She grows in respect toward him. He protects and nourishes her.

(2:4) “*He brought me into the banqueting house. And his banner over me was love.”* He honors her publicly. Banner speaks of ownership

(2:5-6) “*Sustain me with cakes of raisins; refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.* (She is sexually excited) *His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me*.” She is passionate about how she feels about him, she is longing for physical intimacy. Cakes of Raisins in eastern culture considered an aphrodisiac because it was an offering to the fertility gods.

(2:7) “*I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases*.” The man must respond to her passion with self control and protection. He must be gentle and tender. This clearly shows that there is a time and place for intimacy, but it is not now.

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT DATING (“*JUST BEING FRIENDS*”)**

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL DATING:

### Time

Dating requires that you spend time together to get to know the person – brief, frequent encounters over a period of time; avoid long concentrations of time when you first begin dating. Too, much, too soon and you are likely to jump to conclusions that you never would make if you took time to remain more objective.

Dating requires time for having long (*even though the encounters are brief the majority of your time should be spent in dialogue)*, leisurely conversations and for participating in public activities together, and in the process, getting to know each other better in a wide variety of settings and circumstances.

### A “No Strings Attached” Policy

If you begin to date a person exclusively then you have moved into courtship (*today’s generation would refer to this as getting serious)*. It is wise to group date and do so in public places. You will gain valuable information about how your date responds to other people, and how your date evaluates the behavior of others. The couple in the Song of Songs 1:16-17 had a picnic out in the open, in full view of the public.

### Respect

If you don’t show respect to a woman, she will never believe that you truly *like* and admire her. Like is a critical prerequisite to love.

Time, a “no strings” policy and respect should ideally blend together during dating; if not then you need to back out.

***DESIRABLE EXPECTATIONS DURING DATING:***

1. **A Desire to Listen and a Growing Ease in Communication**

A key question a woman should ask during dating is this: Does he really listen to me and seek out my opinion and ideas? (I have found from counseling experience that it is generally men who lack in this area – if this isn’t practiced during the relationship – there will be problems later).

One of the greatest things you can ever do as a man is to develop good listening skills – not only for your wife’s sake, but also for your own sake. Listening is a universal sign of wisdom. *(Practice making eye contact when listening, not a good time to watch sports or read the paper).*

## A growing Feeling of Endearment

Couples who are deeply in love and have a good marriage usually have terms of endearment reserved exclusively for their spouses. Criticism or a belittling attitude can quickly destroy feelings of endearment in a dating relationship. Beware of those who are simply trying to “win” in the sense of getting you to compromise your values.

If the person you are dating dumps a load of criticism on you periodically or completely ignores you in a group – both of which can cause a feeling of inferiority or insignificance – seek to end your dating relationship. Generally a precursor to physical abuse is verbal abuse – abusive behavior does not disappear over time; it actually will intensify. This woman felt completely safe in Solomon’s presence. Safety and endearment are nearly always expressed in good manners and acts of kindness.

## A Lack of Pressure

Do you feel any pressure from the person you are dating to do things that you don’t believe are right before God? If so take note, because the person doesn’t fear God’s standards in a dating relationship.

## An Open Acknowledgement of Your Dating Relationship

This is not a time for secrecy or hidden agendas. The woman and Solomon had an

open-to-the-public relationship. (2:4) *“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”* Solomon was not ashamed of this woman. **You should only date someone who has the approval of all who love God**. The woman had a knowing in her spirit that Solomon was doing the right thing by her before God and that their relationship was in good spiritual order.

### THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE DATING:

* 1. Does the person have a daily quiet time with the Lord? Their devotion should also encourage mine.
	2. Is the person involved actively in a Christian church or other body of believers?
	3. Is the person pursuing the same type of spiritual life and ministry that you are pursuing?

The more you date a person, the more you should feel as if you are developing something between you that has an “us” identity to it. If you do not have a sense of growing together, then you must face up to the fact that you are probably growing apart.