



Christian Courtship

David Feddes

Christian Courtship

- Picking Partner
- Protecting Purity
- Providing Proximity

Picking Partner

Christian courtship seeks a spouse who fits God's purposes for 3-D marriage.

- Dramatizing the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church
- Developing godly offspring
- Delighting in each other's love

Dramatizing the Christ-church relationship

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:23-25)

- *Question: Is this person a Christian and committed to the Christ-church drama?*

Developing godly offspring

- Judah has been faithless... and has married the daughter of a foreign god... And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. (Malachi 2:11-15)
- She is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. (1 Cor 7:39)
- Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. (2 Cor 6:14)
- *Question: Will this person help me walk with God and partner with me in bringing up godly offspring in a covenant home?*

Delighting in each other's love

- Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth —for your love is more delightful to me than wine... His fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love... (Song 1:2; 2:3-7)
- All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you. You have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes. How delightful is your love... my bride! (Song 4:7-10)
- ***Question: Do we feel romantic attraction and physical desire for each other?***

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Protecting Purity

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to possess his own vessel* in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter... For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. (1 Thess 4:3-7)

*possible meanings: (1) take a wife for himself
(2) control his own body

Reject Recreational Romance

- Definition of dating: *a temporary romantic relationship focused on current enjoyment*
- The average person experiences five “real loves” between the ninth grade and the second year of college—and five real heartbreaks when the relationships end.
- 30% lose virginity by age 15; 85% by age 20
- Americans have high divorce rate—partly because they have so much pre-marriage practice at “falling in love” and breaking up.

Sensible Singleness

God calls a few people to serve him as singles for their entire lives. God calls many to a season of singleness, service, and maturing before leading them to a spouse.

- Get a life before a wife.
- Develop wide-ranging interests.
- Do something daring.
- Trust God's timing.

Commonsense Courtship

1. Pair off only in order to find out whether the two of you are meant for marriage.
2. Pair off only at marriageable age.
(maturity, finance, readiness to commit)
3. Involve families where appropriate.
4. If you start courting and discover this isn't the one for you, end it promptly.
5. If you decide to get married, avoid overly long engagement.
6. Wait for honey till the honeymoon. Avoid backseats and bedrooms until marriage.



Masai Marriage

My heart beefs for you!

Women and cows are the most important parts of Masai society because they give birth to life. When a man gives cows to his prospective father-in-law, he is giving the most valuable gift he can give in exchange for the gift of the woman to his extended family. The more cows he gives, the more the young man values the marriage, so he seeks to give as many as possible.



Mooo-ving toward marriage

- Future groom raises or earns cows.
- His father contributes cows.
- His brothers, uncles, and cousins add a few.
- 10-20 cows is a good number.
- Bride's father keeps some of the cows.
- Bride's brothers, uncles, and cousins each get some of the cows.

Leaving your wife is a cowtastrophe!

- To display her dignity and pay her bills, she gets all cows you gave her family members.
- Her family members are mad at you. She gets all cows that had been given to them.
- Your family members are mad that you wasted their cows by dumping your wife. If you want another wife, you're on your own.
- Divorce is very rare among Masai!

Is contemporary Western culture following a better way?

- Who happens to be getting tipsy in the singles bar tonight?
- What stranger in the classifieds or on the internet seems like the best catch?
- If it feels good, do it.
- “Friends with benefits”—alley cat morality.

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 - ✓ Dramatizing Christ-church relationship
 - ✓ Developing godly offspring
 - ✓ Delighting in each other's love
- **Protecting Purity**
 - ✓ Reject recreational romance
 - ✓ Sensible singleness
 - ✓ Commonsense courtship
- **Providing Proximity**

Providing proximity

Cultivate community in a positive courtship culture, where Christian young ladies and men can mingle and meet a good match.

1. Avoid extremes.
2. Flexibility, not fixed formulas.
3. Cultivate community with shared vision.
4. Create contexts for boys and girls to mingle in group settings
5. Frumpiness is not godliness.
6. Disappointment is not disaster.

Avoid extremes

Some approaches focus on insuring that nothing goes wrong—and nothing goes! The goal is lots of godly marriages, not tons of people staying single into their thirties and pining for a special someone to miraculously materialize. The “perfect” courtships described by gurus in books and at conferences may be exceptions for only an elite few.

Flexibility not fixed formulas

Love is a mysterious marvel, not a mechanic's manual. Among things "too amazing for me" is "the way of a man with a maid" (Prov 30:18-19). In some cases, parents or pastors or friends may facilitate matchmaking.

Cultivate community

Ideally, seek a church where the elders, parents, and young people hold shared vision for Christian marriage and courtship. If such a church isn't available, seek out subgroups of like-minded families within a church, or across congregational boundaries, that share this vision, and find ways for young people to mingle appropriately.

Create contexts for mingling

Create contexts for Christian boys and girls to mingle in group settings, even before they're old enough to pair off or consider marriage. This can occur in a group for young people with many parents present and involved. It can happen in ordinary Christian hospitality as families fellowship in each other's homes. It can occur in groups for music, drama, or sports, as young people interact with parents present.

Frumpiness is not godliness

Beauty is not evil. Young ladies can adorn themselves to be attractive and still be modest. Shameless immodesty is a serious problem in the wider culture. But the solution is not to make girls as plain as possible so that no one would ever look twice at them. If parents pressure their daughters to look homely, then their parents' home may be where the daughters remain indefinitely.

Disappointment is not disaster

Expect some requests for courtship to be declined, either by the father or by the girl. Expect some courtships not to lead to marriage. That's painful, but it's not the end of the world. An honorable courtship that doesn't end in marriage still achieves its purpose: determining whether two people are meant for each other. There's less pressure if we all agree that it's okay when the answer sometimes turns out to be no.

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