

DISCERNING LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP

<i>Levels of Friendship</i>	<i>Freedoms and Characteristics</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
1. _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ _____ 	1. _____ 2. _____ _____ _____ _____
2. _____ _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ _____ 	3. _____ _____ 4. _____
3. _____ _____ _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ _____ 	5. _____ _____ 6. _____
4. _____ _____ _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ _____ • _____ _____ 	7. _____ 8. _____

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (I Corinthians 15:33).

DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS

1. _____

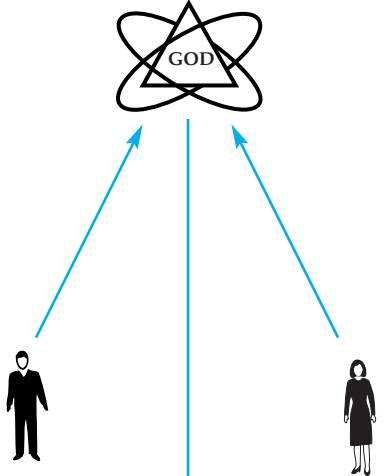

2. _____

A. _____

B. _____

3. _____

REQUIREMENTS OF A TOTAL MARRIAGE

<i>God's Order</i>	<i>Basic Objectives</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<p>_____</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p>	<p>A. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>B. _____</p> <p>C. _____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

FOUR DECISIONS BETWEEN FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS

1. _____

2. _____

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

3. _____

4. _____

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL REGARDING A LIFE PARTNER

1.

potential
life partners
↓

2.

3.

4.

5.

1.

2.

3.

6.

The
One
God
Brings
Into
Your
Life

MARRIAGE CONFLICTS CAUSED BY DEFRAUDING



DATING

Lack of
Self-
Control

Physical
Affection

Lovers
Standards

More
Delicate
Conscience



MARRIAGE

Insensitive
to Needs

Expects
Response

"Does he
love me?"

Seeds of
Guilt and
Doubt

Reacts to Her
Coolness

Makes
Demands

COLD

"He doesn't
love me."

Confirms
Doubts

Attempts to
Prove Love

Buys
Gifts

FINANCIAL
PROBLEMS

Accepts
Gifts

Focuses on
Temporal Things

Concentrates
on Work

Concentrates on
Home, Television,
Children, and Work

COOL

SEVEN GOALS OF A REBUILDER

1. REBUILD A HEART THAT SEEKS AFTER GOD.

God's basis for success

"... As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (II Chronicles 26:5).

2. REBUILD A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, A SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS.

Conquer the enemies of guilt and bitterness.

3. REBUILD YOUR MIND WITH GOD'S PICTURE OF MARRIAGE.

Confirm God's basic blueprint of marriage.

4. REBUILD YOUR MARRIAGE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

Concentrate on convictions and character.

5. REBUILD A "LEARNING RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE CHILDREN.

Cast down humanistic strongholds.

Construct basic principles of life.

6. REBUILD NEW PURPOSE IN YOUR LIFE.

Create beauty and glory in a life message.

7. REBUILD THE DAMAGED MARRIAGES OF OTHERS.

Counsel with the power of truth.

The points on this outline are explained in detail in the 250-page *Rebuilder's Guide*. This resource has already been used by thousands of rebuilders to strengthen their relationships with the Lord, their marriage partner, and their children.

THE WISDOM AND FREEDOM OF COURTSHIP VS. DATING

Many young people are relieved to learn that there is an alternative to the pressures and hurts that often result from dating. The concept of *courtship* involves applying Biblical principles to this area of life, thus allowing young people to have greater effectiveness in their single years and a more fulfilling relationship with their partner in marriage.

Definition of *Dating*: Singling out one person of the opposite gender and cultivating interest through thoughts, looks, notes, talks, or events.

Why Dating Causes Conflicts

- The motive is wrong—getting vs. giving
- The goal is wrong—pleasure vs. commitment
- The idea is wrong—human nature vs. limitations
- The results are wrong—hurts vs. edification

Definition of *Courtship*: Two fathers agreeing to work with a qualified young man to win the daughter for marriage.

Definition of *Engagement*: A daughter's agreeing to accept the proposed love and protection of a young man in marriage.

COURTSHIP VS. DATING

The Broken Heart Syndrome

Many of us have assumed that the typical pattern of American teenage dating is a necessary part of growing up and finding a mate. Christian young people experience an enormous pressure to be "normal." Being normal is somehow identified, during the teen years, as being romantically attached to someone of the opposite sex.

In the typical Christian youth group, young people seek repeated romantic attachments that, while hopefully avoiding the sin of fornication, are so emotionally intense that "breaking up" is a traumatic experience. As a result, memories and emotional scars are created that hinder healthy relationships in the future.

As this process continues over a period of several years, clear animosities often develop within the Christian youth groups between former partners and each partner's new attachments. I have seen youth groups torn apart with bitter jealousies as a result of this problem's being allowed to continue.

Another worrisome result of this trend is that younger children in our fellowships observe this dating pattern in the youth groups and mentally prepare for the same experiences that they will someday fulfill unless the pattern is substantially altered.

I believe that God has a better way for our teens. As a young, unmarried youth minister, I was challenged to develop a Scriptural pattern for my own social life. The convictions the Lord helped me develop changed my life and the lives of many in my youth group. I first accepted the principle that God wants young people to honor their parents by allowing them to give direction to their social lives and by voluntarily submitting their choice of a marital partner to them.

Second, I conclude that there is a difference between *dating* and *courtship*, and that parent-blessed courting can be healthy and honoring to God, but dating is contrary to Scripture.

Because our youth group was truly committed to growing in the Lord, they accepted my challenge, and as a group gave up dating. The teens no

longer felt the pressure to be attached romantically to one person but could enjoy true fellowship with many individuals of both sexes without engendering jealousy.

The distinction between *dating* and *courtship* lies in the intent of the relationship. When a couple pairs off in a *courtship* relationship, they both know that the purpose of the relationship is to consider marriage. On the other hand, *dating*, or *casual dating*, as some writers have made the distinction, is simply to enjoy each other's company for the present. Both parties understand that while marriage may be possible in the future, neither person is seriously considering such at the moment. Thus, even for Christians who draw the line at sexual immorality, immediate pleasure is the whole purpose for dating, while courting has a long-term end in view.

In our Christian youth group we rejected dating as an unscriptural compromise with selfish gratification, opening the door to further unnecessary temptations. We also stressed that courting should be undertaken only with the full knowledge and blessing of both partners' parents. Courting was also to be reserved for the time when both parties were nearly old enough to marry. This clearly excluded most teens and enabled us to avoid the sin of defrauding one another by claiming that we were courting when marriage was clearly unrealistic in the future.

The time came when fulfilling these principles had to be proven in my own life as I struggled with submitting my hopes for marriage to my parents. I am so grateful that my parents had the fortitude to withhold their blessing from what they knew was not God's plan for me. I believe that my wife, Connie, and I have a most fulfilling marriage largely because we were both committed to Scriptural principles that governed our social lives.

Jonathan and Connie Lindvall teach their four children at home in Porterville, California. He teaches seminars on priorities for Christian families.

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The Rewards of Courtship

- Gives new freedom in friendships
- Avoids envy and jealousy
- Allows dedication to please the Lord
(Dating violates I Corinthians 7:31–34.)

Why dating has no place in Scripture

“. . . He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

*“There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband”
(I Corinthians 7:32–34).*

Whom do you please when you are dating?

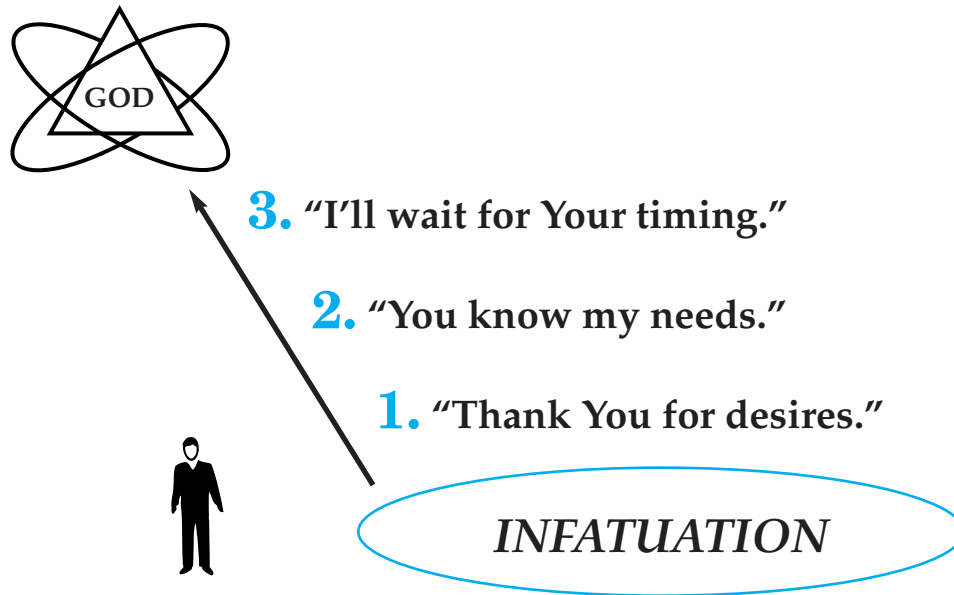
- Promotes self-control and moral purity
- Provides for objective evaluation
- Eliminates defrauding and bitterness
- Bases marriage on God’s will
(Dating conclusions change.)
- Honors the father’s authority

Life Commitment:

“Heavenly Father, I know that You are far more concerned about my future marriage than I am, and I thank You that You love me and will clearly direct me to the life partner of Your design for me. I also recognize that You have goals that You desire for me to accomplish while I am single, so I do now accept Your purposes for my singleness. I purpose to see how I can please You, and I trust You to work through my authorities to confirm Your direction for me regarding marriage.”

THE REQUIREMENTS OF COURTSHIP

- A life purpose bigger than marriage
- A “one-man, one-woman” commitment
- A restraint of affection—*I Corinthians 7:1*
- A loyalty to parents (time commitment)
- An ability to deal with infatuations



- A readiness for marriage responsibilities
- An answer to “matchmakers”

“Thank you for your interest in my welfare. Right now, I’m learning to be content as a single person. If I’m not content as a single person, I’ll not be fulfilled in marriage.”