

NAVIGATING FRIENDSHIP TO ENGAGEMENT

Bob Kauflin

I. Introduction

The Bible describes three types of relationships for singles when it comes to members of the opposite sex.

- A. In friendship, we commit to doing what friends do, which is serving others for the glory of God.
- B. In engagement, we make a commitment to marry someone.
- C. In marriage, we commit to fulfill God's purposes as a husband or wife, putting on display the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church.

How do you move from friendship to engagement in a way that honors the Lord and serves others?

Whatever we call it, it's not a new status with special privileges like physical intimacy or control over one another's schedules.

We're engaging in a new pursuit that will enable us to discern God's will.

II. Know What It Means to Be a Friend

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is **a friend who sticks closer than a brother.**" (Proverbs 18:24)

"**A friend loves at all times**, and a brother is born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17)

"A dishonest man spreads strife, and **a whisperer separates close friends.**" (Proverbs 16:28)

"**Faithful are the wounds of a friend**; profuse are the kisses of an enemy." (Proverbs 27:6)

"Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and **the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.**" (Proverbs 27:9)

*Let love be **genuine**. **Abhor what is evil**; **hold fast to what is good**. Love one another with **brotherly affection**. Outdo one another in showing **honor**. Do not be slothful in zeal, be **fervent** in spirit, **serve the Lord**. (Rom. 12:9-11)*

"Consumer mentality" vs. a "companion mentality."

III. Pursue with humility

“Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered” (Prov. 28:26).

IV. Pursue with prayer.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” (James 1:5)

V. Pursue with integrity.

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out (Proverbs 10:9)

Love does no wrong to a neighbor (Rom. 13:10).

Beginning - What are we doing?

Along the way - How are things going?

“Dating is not a way of maximizing benefits and minimizing obligations.” Ben Stuart

Ending/Transition – Where do we go from here?

“A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.” (Proverbs 26:28)

“ *Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips.*” (Proverbs 24:26)

VI. Pursue with purity

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body 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, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. (1 Thess. 4:3-6)

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5)
“Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.” (1 Tim. 5:1-2)

Five reasons why sexual affection outside marriage is unwise:

1. Weakens our resistance to further temptation.
2. Can lead to confusion, often for the woman.
3. Makes it difficult to hear God’s direction.
4. Makes it difficult to maintain a friendship if you have to end the relationship.
5. Can break down trust, even after you’re married.

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Hebrews 13:4)

“Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?” Proverbs 6:27-28)

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18)

VII. Pursue with intentionality.

Now is the time to ask as many questions as you can think of and then ask some more.

Spiritual

1. What does the other person believe? Why do they believe those things?
2. How well does the other person understand and apply the Gospel?
3. What do they believe about the sovereignty of God? How does it affect the way they live their lives?
4. How do they view and interact with God’s Word?
5. How consistent is their walk with God? Their prayer life? Devotions?
6. What is their view of the church, membership, and involvement? In what ways do they already serve?
7. What are their tendencies and life dominating sins?

Life & Relationships

8. What major experiences have shaped their life?
9. What convictions do they have? How did they form them?
10. How do they handle conflict?
11. What is their relational history? How have they processed past relationships?
12. What do their friends say and think about them?

13. How do they respond to correction? How faithful are they to correct others?

Personal

14. What are their short term, mid-term, and long term goals?
15. What are their hobbies?
16. What is their health history?
17. How much do they read? What do they read?
18. What refreshes them?
19. Do I like hanging out with this person?
20. Am I attracted to this person?

Family

21. How do they relate to their parents? To their siblings?
22. What do they think about children? Adoption? Raising children? Size of family?
23. How do they view men's and women's roles? How do they treat members of the opposite sex?

See John Piper's ***Questions to Ask When Preparing for Marriage***

VIII. Pursue with faith

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Heb. 11:6).

For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin (Rom. 14:23b).

"O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me." (Psalm 131:1)

A man has faith God will confirm whether or not he's found the woman God wants him to lead, care for, cherish, provide for, and protect for the rest of his life (Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Pet. 3:7; Prov. 5:15-19; Col. 3:19).

A woman has faith God will confirm whether or not she's found the man God wants her to serve, respect, love, honor, submit to, encourage, and support for the rest of her life (Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Col. 3:18).

"The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it." (Proverbs 22:3) (also 27:12)

IX. Conclusion