

Initiate Under the Accountability of others

Initiate the relationship under accountability and guidance of others.

Be careful to not get emotionally entangled before marriage.

Mechanics of Initiation

There is not a biblical step-by-step process to follow, but there are some general principles.

- Establish accountability from early on.
- Keep in mind general biblical principles of friendship as you initiate: (1) Am I treating her as a sister, in absolute purity? (2) Am I consistently seeking the counsel of others (trusted friends of mine and hers, godly parents, church leaders, etc)? (3) Am I considering her better than myself, and putting her needs first?
- Ask her out a few times (I hesitate to even say “a few” for fear of encouraging legalism) and don’t take too much time in making your intentions clear. Your main goal is to express your desire to spend more time with the express interest of seeing if the two of you might one day get married, and to see if she has the same interest.
- As a woman:
 - Take time if you need to think, pray and get counsel, but don’t let your answer drag out too long.
 - Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no.”
 - Be careful of your ideal.

Core Seminars—Singleness & Courtship Class 7: Initiation



Introduction

Five biblical principles are important for our discussion today:

1. Single people should date only for the direct purpose of finding a marriage partner.
2. Generally, men should *usually* initiate a pre-marital relationship, women should *usually* respond to that initiation (though not necessarily always positively or negatively).
3. Relationships ideally should be initiated and carried out under the authority of scripture, and with lots of counsel and guidance from family, friends from church, and church leaders.
4. Single people should be looking for those characteristics that are extolled in scripture for potential spouses.
5. Finally, will you as a couple serve God and His local church well together? (Will the marriage glorify God because of the mutual benefits it provides each spouse which are used to edify His Church? Do you serve well together?)

One way to define courtship/dating is a process of getting from singleness to marriage that (1) begins with the man being intentional; (2) conducted under the accountability of others (family, church, and wise friends), and (3) always has marriage as its goal.

Seeking a Spouse on the Basis of Biblical Characteristics

Being A Potential Spouse

A couple of important questions to ask yourself:

- Are you a Christian? (John 3; Rom 10:9)
- Are you growing as a Christian? (I Tim. 3; Gal. 5:22)
- Are you spiritually ready to take on a relationship?
- Are you humble, teachable, respect authority?
- Are you able to maintain good relationships and friendships?
- Are you financially prepared?

Questions/Comments? Email us at

Ten General Questions to Ask

- (1) Is he/she *clearly* a believer? (2 Cor 6:14-15) If you have any uncertainty about this, get counsel from others before you move towards a relationship!
- (2) Does he/she show an evident love for God (in how he/she spends time, money etc.)?
- (3) Does he/she show an evident love for God's Word?
- (4) Is clear evidence of Christian character? Does he/she exhibit the fruits of the Spirit? (Gal. 5: 22-23) – Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- (5) Is he/she fruitful in ministry?
- (6) Does he/she show clear regard and care for others?
- (7) Is he/she faithful and consistent in the Christian life in prayer, scriptural study, etc?
- (8) Does he/she have the same view and valuation of marriage as you?
- (9) Do you trust him/her and trust his/her character?
- (10) Do those who you know and trust think highly of this person?

Questions for Women to ask

- (1) Is this a man you respect? Could you envision yourself submitting to and following him over the course of your lives together? (Eph. 5:22-24)
- (2) Do you believe he will care well for you and your children? Will he serve you and encourage your spiritual growth? (I Tim. 5:8, Eph 5:25-29)
- (3) Is he growing in godliness and in the characteristics of biblical manhood? (I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and I Peter 3)

Questions for Men to ask

- (1) Do you believe she will care for you well and be a good mother and discipler to your children (as biblically defined)? (Titus 2:4-5)
- (2) Is she growing in godliness and in the characteristics of biblical womanhood (see Proverbs 31 and I Peter 3)?
- (3) Do you envision her being supportive of you and the God-given task of marriage? (Gen. 2; I Peter 3)

- (4) Can you envision her following you and being responsive to your leadership? Would she encourage you in the task of leadership?

A Couple of Words about Physical Attraction and Romance

Thinking about attraction—should it be a consideration? **Yes.** Should it be a primary consideration? **No.**

It is much wiser, I would argue to first determine whether you are theologically compatible than whether your spouse is beautiful.

One really important reason to marry someone is that you think that you will be able to serve God better together than apart.

A Word about Romance

Finally, let me give a brief admonishment to not over-emphasize romantic feelings as you try to find a spouse.

Initiation of a relationship

Men Initiate

What does this look as two people begin a relationship?

First, the man must initiate asking the woman out on a date.

Initiation means initiation. The risk is yours!

Women Respond

As it is the man's God-given role to initiate, so it is the woman's God-given role to respond.

“Does this mean that *generally* you just sit back and watch and pray and maybe it doesn't ever get off the ground?”

Feel free to respond to the man who shows initiation. Let him know if he's wasting his time, and feel free to appropriately encourage him if he's not.