

Qualifiers:

1 - this content will not be exclusive to dating and romance. But also informs peer groups, and social lives. Even if a young person isn't dating, people around them are. It's a landscape study.

2 – much of our conversation will be extra-biblical (outside of the Bible; wisdom application and implementation, scenarios not found explicitly in scripture) but it won't be ANTI biblical. We are addressing observation and implementation. I'll share a little bit of what I've learned, and what I've seen over and over from teens and young adults. There's the pulpit, there's a BTC class, then there's a parent summit breakout room where you've chosen to get into some of the weeds of our lives. That's great!

3 - a priority of mine is resourcing you and opening the door for this conversation to continue. Primarily between you and your children. That means a few handouts and a book recommendation will close our time together.

Question:

(Draw the problem) ---- the world has done a good job answering this question mark. Loudly and rushed. Two ways that the Lord doesn't work.

“How do I navigate dating and relationships as a believer in a fallen world?”

Quest:

Establish open communication between parent and child about a Biblical approach to the relationships in their life.

Reminder: the Biblical solution to the clear problem. Theology of singleness and of marriage. Wisdom texts.

The Bible has boundary issues and wisdom issues. Boundary truths: who we are in Christ. The role of men and women. Wisdom issues: Scenarios and environments, heart postures, and self-reflection. The Psalms and The Proverbs. Proverbs especially: written for YOUNG people! Old Testament wisdom whose primary demographic is NOT an aging retiree with time on their hands to study scripture. But YOUNG PEOPLE who are BUSY and in the THICK OF IT.

Read with your children things like:

Proverbs 11:14 – in an abundance of counselors there is victory (safety). The context there is a People group. Nations fall without guidance. The precedent though is set throughout the whole book: input should be more than output.

Proverbs 19:2 – knowledge matters. Wisdom is knowledge applied.

Triangle illustration:

Focus determines fruitfulness. The key is growing closer to Christ so that togetherness is a consequence of that.

Tips and Tricks for navigating this conversation easier (remember the quest?):

For dating:

Questions you can ask your teens:

What are some things you're doing to prioritize THEIR relationship with the Lord?

If you had to pick your top three favorite things about this person, what would they be and why?

Questions your teens can ask YOU:

Can you share with me your experience dating mom/dad or the peer group you were a part of during that time? (How much of your story do your kids know?)

Resource:

Single, Dating, Engaged, Married STORY OF HIS COUNSELING – Ben Stuart [QR Code] + Book example to flip through

Additional Resources:

We have TAUGHT A LOT on this stuff over the last few years, and in a few different contexts. I decided to provide the notes for ALL OF THEM. So if you would like to read these, take this, critique this. I welcome it!

Questions?

QR Code below for the book resource. Two Handouts also listed on the pages below.



TEN TAKEAWAYS: DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS (PART I)

June 1 2025

1. Marriage is not a finish line. (Ephesians 5)
2. Those that surround you shape your view and decisions. (Proverbs 13:20)
3. Knowledge puffs up, Wisdom saves. (James 1:5)
4. True freedom is the ability to fulfill created intent. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)
5. Engagement is for merging family, finances, and future. (Proverbs 21:5)
6. Find a third-party ASAP. (Proverbs 11:14)
7. Your priority in a relationship should be the other persons walk with Christ. (Philippians 2:4)
8. You should humbly ask your parents about their experience in these seasons. (Proverbs)
9. College Dating is best done in this order: observe, inquire, pursue, commit. (Proverbs)
10. Ask questions openly and often, not just to each-other but to someone you respect. (Proverbs)

Ephesians 5:25-27

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Proverbs 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

Proverbs 11:14

Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

10 Lies for Building Relationships/10 Biblical Responses

(A two-sided document from Keystone Young Adult Ministry in 2022)

I am the things I've done, and my identity is also defined by my peer group.

I am who Christ says I am; my peer group merely demonstrates my values, preferences, and interests.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” — Colossians 3:12

I am supposed to create opportunities, not seize them.

I am designed to react to God’s will, work, and wishes...not the other way around.

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.” – Ephesians 1:11-12

It is my responsibility to make friends, find a spouse, and start a family.

It is my responsibility to be faithful; knowing full-well the Biblical design for men and women.

“Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.” – Proverbs 3:3

Relationships come easily, naturally, and quickly to prove God is the one establishing them.

The Devil is the one who rushes, God is thoughtful and calm; Relationships are hard, naturally broken, and slow to build.

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” – 1 Peter 5:8-9

God wants me to be happy.

God wants you to be faithful; In fact our understanding of Biblical joy and happiness is built upon our understanding of faith. Happy (Joy) is a consequence and outcome of God’s ultimate desire.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 15:13

Relationships should be built on mutual trust, faithfulness to one another, and personal promises.

Relationships should be built on trusting the LORD, being faithful to HIM, and convictions to honor his Word as absolute and not suggestive.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. – Proverbs 3:5-6

God calls us to other people as He calls us to himself.

God is not in the business of calling us to other people before He has first called us to Himself.

“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” – Hebrews 7:25