

Last week we talked about mistakes we make in forming relationships and some of the pit falls we get into. To continue that theme for a little longer, let's look at some more.

5. We think that the only necessary requirement for a date or mate is that he or she is a Christian. While it is very true that God has commanded us not to be "unequally yoked", that is married or bound to another in some way, I don't believe that it is the only consideration for a spouse. In today's society, when we find a really attractive guy or girl, who is also a really neat Christian, we jump on it. We don't look at what God really says about it. Just think of it as God knows everyone, and He'll show us who is the one we're to date and then marry. There are many more prerequisites that just being a Christian. Be sure you checkout the relationship with everyone you respect. Have your intended spouse meet all your friends and family, and if someone has a check about it, stop and ask yourself why? They may be seeing something you can't see. If the relationship is right, close scrutiny won't destroy it.

6. We carry our list of requirements way too far, and are too quick to judge others and by our standards. Lists are Okay and can help you to see flaws in others. But not to use them as if you were purchasing a new car. You know, if all the right equipment is there and the color is right, and price is right, it is sold.

7. We tend to neglect our friends when we start to develop a dating relationship. Many times our friends are our family when we don't have a marriage partner. That was very true for me before Susan and I married. And those friendships are valued very much, almost more than if we were married. So when one of the "family" begins to date, and branch out into different directions, we feel deserted for several reasons.

First, we feel we're losing that close companionship because we no longer share the same things.

Second, we see their time being occupied by the "new comer "which leaves less time for us.

Third, it seems to make it more painful that they are blessed with a relationship and we are not

To cure this problem, we need to do several things.

- A. Include your old friends in activities with your new friend or friends.
- B. Don't talk about your new found friend all the time.
- C. Keep making plans with your old friends as usual and be just as interested in their lives as always.
- D. Listen to your old friends when they tell you their opinion of your new friend.

Let's look at some things that relationships must be if they are to be pleasing to God. A Good Relationship is one that:

- I. **Brings Glory to God.** God has said that we are not to be in a relationship with an unbeliever and that is especially true for a romantic relationship. Every relationship should be one that seeks to find ways to bring God Glory through it.
- II. **Will be a blessing to others.** If our only purpose in a relationship is to make us feel good, God cannot and will not bless us in that endeavor. We are to love one another and bear one another's burdens and help each other Christians.
- III. **Is in keeping with Gods example.** Nothing is worst than for a Christian to say he or she is a Christian and then act like the world. Every relationship that is following Christ's example will succeed. That does not mean that each one will be a marriage relationship, but God will be glorified and His name exalted, not us.
- IV. **Keeps us growing in our relationship with God.** 2In light of all the other things we have said, this is the most important. Any, I repeat, any relationship that does not encourage you and help you in your spiritual growth needs to go. You do not have time to waste in such relationships.

Ask yourself three questions about your relationship:

A. **Is this relationship consistent with the commands and principles of God's Word?** How many hurt hearts and crushed spirits have been caused by us not heeding to the principles of God? We must take a stand and not compromise our convictions when it comes to our relationships.

B. **Does this relationship cast God in a positive light?** Do people look at us and know that our relationship is pure, and pleasing to God? Does our relationship glorify God in all that is done?

C. **Do we make our relationship so interesting and exciting that others will want to enjoy a relationship based on the same principles?** Is there a freshness and energy in your relationship that causes others to seek out God for themselves? I think that in order to be a good partner in a relationship, several things must be true about you.

1. You must have a good self-image. People respond to us on several different planes. Spiritual, Emotional, Intellectual, and Physical. The perception of us is often influenced by our perception of ourselves. When we "feel" as if we are worthless, others often look at us as less attractive and fun to be around. Generally the life of the party is the yahoo who isn't afraid to speak his mind.

2. You must trust others and be trustworthy. Relationships cannot exist without some trust. The underlying cause of most relationship problems can be traced to, at least in part, the lack of trust, or one party breaking the trust of the other.

Interpersonal relationships dictate a certain amount of risk, but the payoff is worth it. **3. You must take time for others.** Be the kind of friend who is aware of what someone else is going through or is concerned about even before they tell you. Let people know you have time for them and that you care about them and your relationships will grow to new heights. In closing, I want to give you six principles to think about.

- a. Christian relationships are vital in preparing Christians live and serve effective Christian lives.
- b. Christians need to identify and break down barriers that hinder sound, Christian relationships.
- c. Christian relationships do not happen automatically. It requires creativity, initiative, and willingness.
- d. Christian relationships require involvement in opportunities that foster Christian principles.
- e. Christian relationships can be made or broken by the choices we make and the actions we take.
- f. Christian relationships become spiritually productive through the encouragement of others.