

Relationships: the heart, brain and courage to pursue (Part 2)

You're on a journey of discovery – discovering God's will for your life, and relationships are no exception to that.

Are you willing to journey through the pages of Scripture to find your answers?

Are you willing to follow the road that's laid out in Scripture?

God will give you the heart, brain and courage to honor Him in this area of your life.

We need to think the right way about Scripture.

There's a tendency to approach the Word with the, "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME" mentality?

Things you need to really believe about the Bible:

The source of Scripture is God: it's breathed out by God Himself

Inerrancy – totally true, free from error in all it affirms.

Every time you open God's Word imagine God's face behind the pages of Scripture – He's got something to say! He's making Himself known.

The clarity of Scripture (it *can* be understood!) 2 Tim 2:15

Don't think that if scholars can't agree, then we can't ever "get it."

God isn't teasing us with His Word. It's not some kind of frustrating code.

Deut. 29:29

The usefulness (sufficiency) of Scripture

2 Tim 3:16; Isaiah 55:10-11; Hebrews 4:12

Ignites faith – Romans 10:17

Gives new spiritual life – 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18

Helps us grow – 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:13; Acts 20:23

Sanctifies – Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:26

Searches and convicts – Heb. 4:12

Liberates – John 8:31-32

Refreshes and renews (and all sorts of other things) – Psalm 119

"What we say we believe makes little difference until we act on our belief."

Is there a willingness to place yourself under the authority of God's Word?

The closer you come to the core issues of your life (the hot topics) AND the closer you come to the areas of sin in your life, the less rational you're tempted to become...so you need the clarity of God's Word ringing in your ears.

"How we relate to Scripture reveals how we view God Himself."

The *heart* behind the pursuit

Understand God's heart – God's goal – for relationships and adopt that heart as our own!

Many of you are at a crossroads.

You'll have to decide if your relationship with Jesus is going to define how you walk out relationships.

Proverbs 14:12 tells us, *“There is a way that **seems** right to man, but it’s end is the way of death.”*

One of the biggest dangers you face today is *death pretending to be life.*

Do we believe that God has our best interest at heart when He shows us the way to live through His Word? Or do we think He’s in some way, holding back things we’d be better off having?

The gospel confronts and cures our suspicion of God and builds trust...

My goal? That you would walk away saying, *“Here’s what I know: I want to honor God in my relationships with the opposite sex, so I will look to His Word and discover what living in purity looks like, believing that God has my best interest in mind. I’m not going to be rushed into anything by society – or the fear of man – but I’m going to trust God to help me **pursue and be pursued!**”*

When you pursue a *purposeful* relationship – one that honors God – you are *“Pursuing a friendship with possibility and discovery of whether you’re meant to be married. It’s above all, purposeful. It’s not without risk and should involve the authority God has placed in your lives. It’s simply a way to be careful with the other person’s heart while opening up your lives to each other.”*

The *Brain* behind the pursuit

Think. Read. Study. Pursue.

Faith, communication, intentionality

Most important question: how is your relationship with Jesus?

Luke 14:25-27/ priorities; complete commitment

Is it strong, maturing and growing?

Is it your first priority above all other relationships?

Do you need to wait to pursue someone until your relationship with Him is stronger?

Do you have as a goal to meet someone who will help you GROW in your relationship with Jesus?

Most important question #2: Are you believing cultural lies?

Are you taking your cues from movies, books, internet, pornography, past relationships, fantasies, ungodly friends?

Are you giving way to sinful desires and thoughts that need to be repented of before pursuing a relationship?

Have you accepted the fact that marriage is for holiness before happiness?

Are you still believing the lie that marriage will “complete you”?

You will become very depressed if you hang onto this thought...marriage involves happiness but it’s first for our sanctification.

How do you evaluate whether someone you’re interested in will make a good husband/ wife?

What do you *look for* in the opposite sex?

Is there a standard? Why do people “settle”?

To the guys, how can you prepare?

To the lady’s, what are you looking for in a man?

Proverbs 26:12 *“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”*

1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 3:5-9; Ephesians 4:27-5:7

Men, God has called us to be servant initiators – firm, but gentle; masculine but caring; leaders yet servants – to protect, not seduce and to obey the Word of God above all things.

As husbands, you’ll be called to exercise your leadership with grace and wisdom. If you want a future wife who will follow your lead, then it’s essential you strive to lead as modeled in Scripture!

Servant-leadership. 1 Peter 3:7

You will be responsible before God...

1. To provide spiritual direction and care in your relationship
2. To provide management of the home, set clear direction for the home and for her in how you want her to help

The temptation? To either be harsh jerk or a wimpy doormat.

Sacrifice.

Masculinity today is all about attitude and image and because of that we’ve gotten it all wrong.

Think of ways you can live a sacrificial life and begin today.

Responsibility.

Nothing will ever get accomplished unless you put yourself out there and take on responsibility.

Resolve.

Paul was a man of resolve. He pressed on toward the goal...of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus had resolve in going to the cross.

A **standard bearer** is a soldier responsible for carrying the distinctive flag of a unit, regiment or army. A leading figure in a cause or movement.

Charles Spurgeon: *“It is around the standard bearer that the fight is thickest. There the battle-axes ring upon the helmets and the arrows are bent upon the armor, for the foe knows that if he can cut down the standard, he will strike a heavy blow and cause deep discouragement.”*

Purity.

What does Paul tell the “single” Timothy in **1 Timothy 5:2** about younger women?

Humility grounded in the truth of God’s Word.

Fear of God. Love of God.

Seven questions for women to ask about a man¹

1. Do you want to help him and join his course of life?

Do you like the direction he's heading or are you going to try and fix him?
Change him?

Are you willing to help him be and do what God has called for him?

2. Is he tough enough to remain strong in tough times?

Does he fold under pressure? Is he willing to work hard? Will he be able to lead you through hard times?

3. Will he take responsibility for you and your children?

4. Is he considerate and gentle with you?

If he doesn't consult you, make decisions with you, ask you what you think and ask how you feel – he's selfish and inconsiderate. If he's harsh or in any way abusive, it will only get worse once you are married. When you're dating a man – he is on his best behavior...

5. Will he be a good father?

Does he believe children are a blessing?

Or are his buddies, hobbies and activities his driving passion?

Do you see in him a role model for generations to come? Your kids, their kids...

6. Is he committed to you?

He shouldn't be a porn guy, a flirt guy, or "has a lot of female friends" guy...he shouldn't compare you with other women he's seen, he shouldn't date other women when he's seeing you...you want a loyal man.

7. Are you valuable to him?

He must treasure you. Bottom line. Cherished.

To the lady's, how can you prepare?

To the men, what are you looking for in a woman?

Jerry said: *"What you set to embrace in a woman reveals your heart"*

Your foolish decisions will leave a wake of devastation in your life, and the life of your children, and on the women involved....

Proverbs 31:10-31 "You need a battle companion for the war of life!"

Women are told that they can find meaning and worth in how they look and what they control....

First of all, for you women to respond to men biblically is a big step of faith.

There aren't a lot of men out there who have followed God's plan, but regardless – it's all about responding to God's commands for you as a woman in obedience and faith – for His glory.

Titus 2:2-8

¹ Questions for dating women and questions for dating men are taken from *Religion Saves (and Nine other Misconceptions)* by Mark Driscoll and his chapter titled *Question 3: Dating*

- Encourage and make room for men to practice servant leadership (this is difficult – can often become a “control” issue)
- Be a sister to the men in your speech, dress and life.
- Begin to see marriage and motherhood as an honor and high calling
- Work on pursuing godliness and *inward* beauty

1 Peter 3:1-4

Submission?!

A wife’s submission to her husband should be done out of a *willing and joyful obedience to God*. In other words you are “voluntarily placing yourself under your husband’s God given authority to lead.”

A women’s ability to submit comes from a resolute trust in God. If a wife places her hope IN her husband, she will undoubtedly be let down. She must place her hope in God alone.

SO practice placing your hope in God now!

There are a lot of misconceptions and abuses out there.

The biblical headship of a husband and the biblical submission of a wife are often despised or passed over out of fear. Some people write it all off as simply a “first century thing.”

I pray that a biblical view of submission and headship will equip, prepare and correct some of your thinking today...

What submission is *not*:

It isn’t agreeing with everything your husband says.

It isn’t leaving your brain or will at the wedding altar.

It isn’t avoiding every effort to change your husband.

It isn’t putting your husband’s will before God’s will.

It isn’t a requirement that you follow your husband into sin. (Their authority is genuine but not absolute!)

It isn’t drawing your spiritual strength from your husband.

It isn’t acting out of fear.

It isn’t submission to *all* men.

It isn’t a divine invitation for husbands to practice authoritarian leadership.

It isn’t the responsibility of the husband to enforce it.

It isn’t the evil plan of husbands all around the world.

What submission is:

John Piper puts submission of wives this way, “*The divine calling to honor and affirm her husbands leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.*”

It is a call by God to be man’s helpmate (see **Genesis 2:20**).

It is a call to support your husband by contributing ideas, suggestions, offer wisdom and insight, pray and encourage, as well as correct!

- Just try and grasp the beauty and privilege of this role! (**Eph. 5:22-33**)
- These roles are not open for redefinition, reinterpretation or adjustment!

True beauty is *what*? 1 Peter 3:1-4 again

This text is not saying women shouldn't wear jewelry or makeup or do their hair...if your going to place that on women from this text then you'll have to tell them that the putting on of clothes is wrong as well!

It's not that these things should be forbidden, it's just that they are NEVER to be a women's SOURCE of beauty.

What's your source? What defines true beauty?

This is a real problem. Just think of all the advertisements we are bombarded with on a daily basis. (EX - Vogue Magazine's 350 pages of advertisements)

The superficial, external ideal is the exact opposite beauty the Bible speaks of.
1 Timothy 2:9-11; Proverbs 31:10

Seven questions for men to ask about a woman

1. Are you overlooking good women?
2. Do you enjoy her?
3. Is she modest?
4. Will she follow your leadership?
5. Does she have noble character?

In other words – he speech, the way she carries herself, how she prays worship God, makes decisions, serves others, interacts with other men...

6. Can you provide her with the lifestyle she expects?

If you're working hard, tithing, investing, saving...she should be satisfied.

7. Is she like any of the women Proverbs *warns* against?

Book recommendations:

Religion Saves (and Nine other Misconceptions) by Mark Driscoll

Doing Things Right in Matters of the Heart by John Ensor

Feminine Appeal by Carolyn Mahaney

What's the Difference? By John Piper

Questions for application and discussion

1. What has most shaped your views of the opposite sex?
2. Why are the distinctions between men and women so important? What do they reflect?
3. Name one area you want to grow in after thinking about your responsibility as a man or woman?
4. What are you looking for in a man or woman and why?

Additional thoughts on roles

What are the roles of a man according to God's Word?

What are the roles of a woman according to God's Word?

Society has tried to blend the sexes – making no distinctions, discouraging the identification of the proper function (role) of the man and the woman in the family/ relationships - the distinct roles men and women are dismissed as “sexist - prejudice, stereotyping, discriminating”

Whether you know it or not you're being taught to look and act a certain way by our culture.

What does it really mean to be a man or to be a woman?

A foundation for us:

- Men and women are equal in value and worth before God (**Genesis 1:27**)
- We were created in the image of God and so we reflect His image – we're image bearers. We represent God.
- Your gender is a central part to who God made you...
- God created us with distinctions.

It's important to know that these roles were **NOT** created by the fall of man! The fall **did** corrupt these roles (**Gen. 3:16**), but GOD created these roles.

- The idea of headship and submission began with the Father and the Son.
- The equality and differences between men and women are VERY good. (Sex within marriage is just one of the many testimonies of this!)
- This issue will, no doubt, test our obedience to the Bible.
- Your decision to obey or to disobey God's Word in this area will have lasting effects on your marriage, children and society.

There is beauty in the differences!

- Adam was created first signifying his unique role as leader and initiator.
- Eve was created from Adam and was brought to Adam to be his helper in whatever tasks God had given to him. This in no way belittles the woman's role – it defines it!

The difference in men and women is what makes life interesting!

A man and a woman were made to compliment each other not be like each other. Our distinct roles are important – they matter to God because they reflect his nature. **Ephesians 5:21-33**