

A Christian view of courtship, dating, engagement, and preparation for marriage

1. Our bodies are sacred and holy, made in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity for the giving and receiving of love and the gift of life that God has given us.
2. Being either male or female is a gift of God within the order of creation for the giving and receiving of His life and love with others according to our respective offices.
3. We were created for the giving and receiving of love through physical expressions according to what is appropriate for the various offices that we hold in relation to others (a husband and a wife, a father and a child, a mother and a child, among friends, and among the engaged or betrothed).
4. How we care for and make use of our bodies in physical expression with others has affects upon us physically, emotionally, and spiritually in either positive or negative ways.
5. Chastity has a positive effect upon our state of being as Christians and our capacity to be faithful to God and to others (friends, family, and spouse).
6. Fornication has a negative effect upon our state of being as Christians and upon our capacity to be faithful to God and to others (friends, family, and spouse).
7. We are called to cultivate healthy friendships with all our neighbors. (The Ten Commandments positive descriptions of what physical love looks like are helpful in determining what is appropriate or inappropriate, selfless or selfish.)
8. Friendship is the starting point for exploring those who might be a suitable spouse for Christian marriage.
9. It is most salutary to "date as friends" whereby a young man and a young woman can get to know each other (what do they believe, what are their values, what is important to them).

10. Attraction to a person of the opposite sex is a wonderful gift, but among Christians the decision to marry must be based upon objective criteria that are informed by the Word of God (Does this person share my faith and commitment to Christ? Does this person share my understanding and belief about Christian marriage and what God calls us to be as Christian husbands or wives).
11. To decide to marry someone who is not a faithful Christian who shares your beliefs is idolatry.
12. Courtship is the process of "wooing" someone to be your spouse with whom you share a common confession of faith and with whom you share attraction and personal delight.
13. Courtship is never coercive. Love must be freely given and open to rejection, or the decision NOT to marry.
14. The physical intimacy of marital love is reserved for the lifelong commitment of love that is given and received in Holy Matrimony.
15. Christ's relationship with His bride the Church and her relationship with Him is the pattern of marital love that is celebrated in the union of a Christian husband and wife.