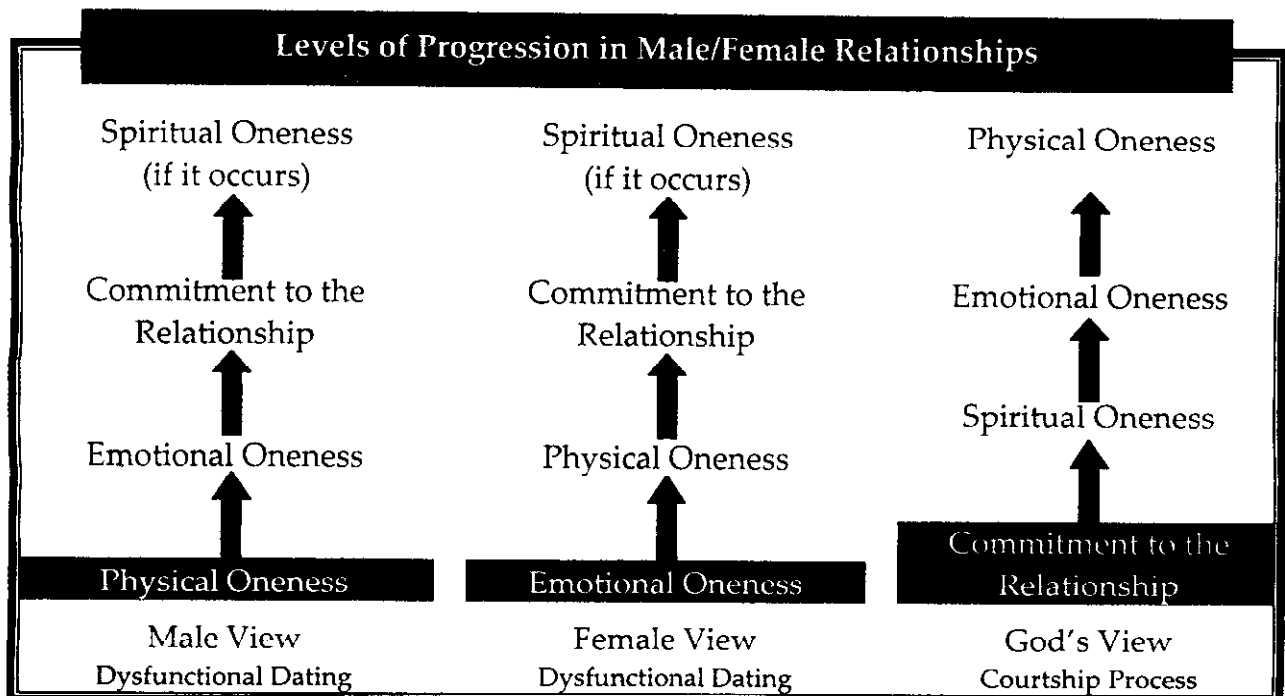


# Courting vs. Dating

*"What's the REAL Difference?"*

COURTSHIP	DATING
1. God-designed, one-on-one, male/female relationships with a view towards marriage	1. One-on-one, male/female relationships mostly seen apart from the prospect of marriage
2. Man takes the initiative in beginning the relationship by seeking the Lord and then the counsel of their parents	2. Man or woman can take the lead in initiating a relationship
3. Courtship begins at an age when the person is ready to get married	3. Dating usually begins in early teen years without concern for marriage
4. Courtship can begin when a man is able to maintain a home; manage finances; and be a provider, protector, and leader of a family	4. The man is usually unable or has given little thought to meeting the criteria of being a husband or a father
5. A woman prepare to be a helper to her husband, a mother, and a household manager	5. Women usually enter a relationship unprepared for married life
6. Courtship takes place mostly in the home, at church, and in family activities	6. Dating takes place mostly away from the home and family environment
7. The man's father gives counsel and final approval to whom his son is about to court; the woman's father screens and works with would-be suitors	7. If he is lucky, the father might meet the date. He finds out about his child's engagement after it occurs
8. Courtship involves progressive levels of friendship: acquaintance, casual friendship, close friendship, and intimate friendship.	8. Dating quickly leads to emotional and physical involvement without development of deep, lasting friendship
9. A parent (or spiritual authority) to oversee the relational development and to provide accountability for spiritual, emotional, and physical involvement is encouraged and desired.	9. A parent (or spiritual authority) to oversee the relational development and to provide accountability for spiritual, emotional, and physical involvement is avoided
10. Spiritual oneness is prohibited before courtship beings among Christian singles.	10. Spiritual oneness is allowed, encouraged, and desired
11. Emotional oneness is prohibited before the engagement period	11. Emotional oneness is allowed, expected and encouraged during dating
12. Physical involvement before marriage is prohibited	12. Physical involvement before marriage is allowed, expected, and even encouraged
13. Complete privacy is not encouraged	13. Complete privacy is permitted and encouraged
14. Engagement is not viewed as a stopgap before marriage	14. Engagement is viewed as a stopgap measure for a couple that has made a mistake



## COURTSHIP PROCESS

COURTSHIP PROCESS	PHASE 1: IDENTITY IN CHRIST	PHASE 2: MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT	PHASE 3: FOUNDATION BUILDING	PHASE 4: FRIENDSHIP LEVELS				PHASE 5: COURTSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY	PHASE 6: ENGAGEMENT	PHASE 7: MARRIAGE
				<i>Acquaintance</i>	<i>Casual Friendship</i>	<i>Close Friendship</i>	<i>Intimate Friendship</i>			
<b>SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT</b>	Commit yourself to being sold out to Christ. Be involved in activities that instill spiritual growth. Learn to be fully engaged to Christ before entertaining the idea of a relationship with another person.	Be involved in ministry opportunities to utilize the talents and gifts God has given you. Learn what it means to serve, love, sacrifice, and yield your rights to others as Christ did for you	Anticipate marriage and lay the foundation for a secure Christian home by completing practical preparation in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Spiritual maturity</li> <li>▪ Godly character</li> <li>▪ Accountability</li> <li>▪ Emotional health</li> <li>▪ Financial stability</li> <li>▪ Vocational training</li> <li>▪ Parent training</li> <li>▪ Household training</li> <li>▪ Commitment</li> </ul>	Focus on being totally content and <u>feeling complete</u> as a single engaged to Christ. Develop a <u>life vision</u> and <u>direction</u> about <u>serving God</u> through ministry opportunities. Avoid spiritual involvement with another individual at this point except for witnessing the Gospel of Jesus	May be involved in a church activity with another individual. Discuss Christ and His kingdom in group settings or Bible studies, but avoid deep spiritual one-on-one talk	Share with each other God's vision for your lives. Discover each other's spiritual gifts, maturity level, and desire to serve God. Experience deeper spiritual talk but limited intimate one-on-one talk.	Begin intimate spiritual talk related at the deepest level. Discuss possibility of marriage and the purpose and process of courtship as it relates to your love for God. Discuss need for spiritual covering and accountability	Begin the process of becoming one spiritually. Spend one-on-one time together through shared prayer time and church attendance. Commit your courtship to glorifying Christ and helping each other grow in Christ.	Continue the process of becoming one spiritually through shared prayer, Bible study, and church attendance. Discuss which church and Sunday school to attend as well as activities and ministry opportunities. Develop a vision for the marriage reflecting Christ and His Church	Experience quality improvement by becoming one through pray, bible study, church involvement, and ministry opportunities. Relate at the deepest spiritual level. Make marriage and family decisions as one in Christ.
<b>EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT</b>			Before becoming emotionally intimate with someone else, rid yourself of <u>emotional baggage</u> left over from <u>childhood</u> and <u>past dating relationships</u> . Recognize that unresolved sin will influence your emotional health	No emotional intimacy. Casual interaction. Limited shared feelings. No one-on-one activities	No emotional intimacy, but share surface feelings. Share close friends or activities. No one-on-one activities	Share deepest feelings but limit emotional involvement. Focus on external social activities instead of one-on-one intimate interaction	Share each other's innermost thoughts, fears, failures, and hopes. Support each other in times of crisis and pain; share times of joy. Limit one-on-one interaction.	Begin pre-engagement counseling. Seek your parents (or other godly counsel) to hold each other accountable. Discuss and write down boundaries and limits of relationship. Increase one-on-one emotional time together.	Begin becoming one emotionally. Spend one-on-one time sharing deep emotional dealings. Develop deep levels of communication. Understand male/female differences and roles within a biblical marriage.	Continue to become one emotionally. Commit and plan on one-on-one time every day by sharing feelings and reflecting Christ's love through grace, mercy, and forgiveness to one another
<b>PHYSICAL COMMITMENT</b>						Side hugs (no full "body slam" hugs)	Side hugs plus holding hands	Side hugs, holding hands, and short kisses. Only limited cuddling	Increase holding hands, kissing and cuddling with caution. Hand to body touching but not intimate body areas	Begin the process of becoming one physically. Share hugs, hold hands, kiss, and touch sexual body areas.
<b>TIME ALONE PER PHASE</b>						0 Hours	201 Hours	80 Hours	190 Hours	Forever