

Marriage and Family Study
Heritage Christian Fellowship
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Relationships, dating and courtship,
and how to make sense of the whole thing.
Part Two

I. Introduction:

II. An approach

Relationship Evaluation:

As Christians it is important that we always evaluate the motives of our heart to determine what and why we are doing in and with our lives. An evaluation of relationships should be approached with the same idea.

More

Questions:

8. What is the motive of my heart?
9. What have I done to properly establish and maintain this relationship?
10. Do I know where I am in the process and progress of this relationship?
11. Have I carefully and clearly communicated my intentions and position?
12. How carefully and clearly has the person I am in relationship with communicated his/her intentions and position?
13. Where are we in this relationship?
14. How do I evaluate what and where this relationship is?

This last question is perhaps the most important question because with out knowing how to evaluate the relationship how can the other questions be answered?

The following is an idea of how to evaluate a relationship on a continuum from singleness to marriage. A careful evaluation at each juncture will be vital before proceeding to the next stage of the relationship. Both people involved must be in agreement and the parameters must be clearly defined and understood. In addition there must be a mutual agreement to greater commitment each juncture requires.

A continuum from singleness to marriage

Singleness

1. Acquaintance

2. Friendship

3. Friendship, brother & sister in the Lord

4. Friends that accompany each other to events

5. Friends that are considering each other as potential spouses

6. Friends that are committed to consider engagement

7. Friends that are engaged to be married

Marriage

Commitment:

One of the common threads that run through the continuum from singleness to marriage is commitment.

What are the commitments that each of the seven (7) stages of the continuum require before the other is established. Each stage must be *established by a commitment*. None of these stages in the continuum can be *assumed*.

NOTE:

Except for the *Acquaintance* stage all other stages have a friendship component.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines "friend, friend-ship" as follows:

In the Old Testament two words, variously translated "friend" or "companion": re`eh, indicating a mere associate, passing friend, neighbor, or companion; 'ahabh, indicating affection natural or unnatural.

In the New Testament also two words: hetairos, "a comrade," or "fellow," and philos, suggesting a more affectionate relation.

As one can see, friendship is progressive. The more the friendship progresses the greater the vulnerability and intimacy.

III. Conclusion: