

Chapter 5: In a Relationship

“In a Relationship” is the phase when a couple declares their love for each other and announce it to their family and friends. It’s official, they are boyfriend and girlfriend. The purpose of this phase is to confirm the feeling that – “This person is the one for me”. This is an opportunity to do a lot of fun things together, like going out to dinner, lunch, movies, concerts etc. You find yourself slowly moving towards higher levels of commitment with a view to eventually get married. Being in a relationship is a pretty good feeling, where you just know love is coming right back at you.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU’RE IN A RELATIONSHIP

1. Is he/she fruitful?
2. Is he/she living according to God’s moral standards?
3. Is he/she in the right place: spiritually and emotionally?
4. Is he/she surrounded by the right people?
5. Is he/she open to change and adventure?
6. Does he/she have great motives and attitudes?
7. Is it the right timing?
8. Does he/she get along with your friends and family (the people around you)?
9. Do we have more disagreements and conflict than good times?
10. Can you picture your marriage being a great one?

Your Questions

Question 1

Is there God’s chosen partner for me?

Answer 1

Genesis 28:1 - 3

So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him: Do not marry a Canaanite woman (Non-believer). Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother’s father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban (a family of believers), your mother’s brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.

The interesting thing about this scripture is that he (Jacob) was told to choose from “among the daughters.” That means that there was more than one to choose from, and that it was totally his choice. Jacob chose “The one” from a community of believers. The point is that we have choices. and God doesn’t choose for us.

Question 2

How do we know if he/she is ‘The One’?

Answer 2

YOU JUST KNOW! Don’t you just hate it when people give you this answer? But it’s true! If you need to ask this question, then you probably haven’t met ‘The one’. It’s not something that you have to strive or try hard to make happen. It’s fun and enjoyable, even though you may have had to put some effort into the early ‘Friends’ phase. There is a convergence of personal characteristics and Godly values that make ‘The one’ a perfect match.

Qualities to look for in the ‘The one’ are fruitfulness and joy.

Matthew 7:17 - 18

Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

This scripture is not just talking about trees but Jesus is figuratively speaking of people and their lives.

Question 3

If he or she sometimes loses control (emotionally and physically), and becomes irrational during conflict. Will this naturally improve over time?

Answer 3

NO!!! Usually, people are on their best behavior before they get married. So the “bad” behavior you see before marriage, is the “bad” behavior you will see after marriage. You might possibly see worse, and it won’t be pretty, nor will it be an improvement.

Question 4

How far can we go physically?

Answer 4

This is the question on everyone's lips. But the answer is, not far. This phase could include some physical contact such as holding hands and possibly some light kissing. So set the boundaries. 'Bikini Zone' and 'Speedo Zone' should be strictly off limits. If you find yourself crossing the line, reset your boundaries. For example, if you're crossing the line during kissing, then you might limit kissing time, or avoid being somewhere too private, or have a 'no kissing' rule. Do whatever it takes to keep pure. You are both responsible for this area of your lives.

2 Timothy 2 : 22 NLT

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

Question 5

What is your view on long-distance relationships?

Answer 5

If you have been in a relationship for a while and then suddenly find yourselves having to move into a long-distance relationship, it might be possible to maintain the relationship and then pick up where you left off because you have already established a strong level of commitment. But if you have just met, or are just friends, or maybe even have gone out for coffee a couple of times, then you haven't had a real chance to establish any level of commitment yet. In this case, you don't know each other well enough to expect a high-level commitment from each other. Distance will make it hard for you to get to know each other well enough. Word on the street, from couples who have attempted a long distance relationship, is that it's not easy. Even couples whose long distance relationships worked out, say things like, "It was touch-and-go."

What You Shouldn't Do When You Are in a Relationship

1. Don't pair off and isolate yourselves as a couple. Keep mixing with your friends.
2. Don't spend time alone together in each others apartment. Invite friends to hang out with you and leave the apartment when they leave.
3. Don't ignore your boundaries!!!
4. Don't be possessive! This person is not your property!
5. Don't buy overly expensive gifts, unless it's a diamond ring! To buy expensive gifts might put pressure on your boyfriend/girlfriend making him/her feel like you're trying to buy their affection.

Tips for People in a Relationship

1. Keep mixing with friends in a group setting. It's very important to keep building relationship with friends of the same sex. Just because you have a boyfriend/girlfriend doesn't mean that your friends will stop needing your friendship and caring for you.
2. Pray for your girlfriend/boyfriend (for each other) and consciously release the other person into future opportunities with their career, education, ministry, etc.
3. Define your life around God's will for your life, not around your boyfriend/girlfriend.
4. Being 'In a Relationship' is the guy's initiative! God set it up this way!

Proverbs 18:22 NLT

'The man who finds a wife finds a treasure, and he receives favor from the Lord.'

That means she probably won't be coming to you, but you have to get out there and look for her until you find her.

5. Take as much time as necessary for both you and your key family members and friends to get used to the idea of both of you together.
6. Set the physical boundaries!!!
7. If your girlfriend/boyfriend starts talking about engagement, it's time to share your past, especially things that could affect your new relationship. For example, talk about previous sexual relationship/s, sexual or physical abuse (it doesn't have to be in detail – most people don't want to know the details – just sharing that it happened is usually enough), share about any sexually transmitted disease, or if you have any bankruptcies, debts, health issues, etc. You should only share this information when you have reached a high level of trust and confidentiality. Most couples that reach this phase are highly committed to keeping all personal information confidential, even if they break up.

Question

What physical boundaries would you like to consider setting?

In a Relationship: Tips for Guys

1. This is when a guy knows he is ready for the next level of commitment. He is confident of his love for that special someone, and would like to confirm that she has the same feelings for him. Usually this is a girl he has known for a while, and with whom he's had a number of enjoyable "coffee times."
2. He has a vision for his life and a good work ethic. Godly vision and discipline are twins, and are some of the keys to success in your life, whether it's career, marriage, or parenting.

Proverbs 29:18 (NIV)

Where there is no revelation (vision), people cast off restraint (discipline); but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.

3. Set out to win her affection. Get to know her and her world. Discover what you have in common, the things that could provide a good foundation for a long lasting relationship.

4. He needs to show her family and close friends that he is the one she has been waiting for and dreaming about.

5. Guys should set boundaries! Don't leave it up to your girlfriend to say, "NO!" Even though God holds both guys and girls accountable for how they use their bodies, show leadership by being the first to initiate setting the boundaries. Don't be influenced by what people in the world do.

Romans 12 : 2 NIV

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In a Relationship: Tips for Girls

1. If they haven't already, girls will start talking to their family and friends about the new special person in their life. Generally, it means a lot to have their endorsement. But, even if they don't approve, we recommend you don't keep him 'secret.' The more you talk about him, the more time your family and friends have to adjust to your choice.

2. Set your physical boundaries! Holding hands and light kissing is a reasonable level of contact, but if you feel pressure to go a little further each time – kissing for longer periods of time, or touching the bikini zone, just say, "NO, this is not what we agreed on." You shouldn't feel obligated or pressured to "prove your love." You don't have to prove anything. The only thing you need to prove is that you are someone who is committed to her convictions.

2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.