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## **SESSION 3 | TEENS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX**

### **I. Introduction**

- Helping our teenagers navigate relationships with the opposite sex can be one of the most challenging aspects of the parenting years.
- Three categories:
  - Friendship – engaged – married.
  - For most teens in high school, the only one of those categories that has relevance is friendship.
- Every relationship requires definition and communication.

### **II. Friendship – Committed to Serve**

- But God sees friendship as primarily defined not by feelings, but by actions.
  - “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Prov. 17:17)
  - “A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.” (Prov. 16:28)

- “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Prov. 18:24)
- “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” (Prov. 27:6)
- “Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.” (Prov. 27:9)
- The NT has this to say about friendship:
  - Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (Rom. 12:9-11)
  - “Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.” (1 Timothy 5:1–2)
- The primary focus of friends is serving, not selfishness; encouraging, not enticing, preparing, not playing.

### **III. Discovery/Pursuit – Committed to Explore**

- The step from friendship to engagement begins with two people who are in a place to think about making that decision.
- With humility
  - Love does not insist on its own way (1 Cor.13:5).

- Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered. (Prov. 28:26)
  
- With integrity
  - Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out (Proverbs 10:9)
  
  - Love does no wrong to a neighbor (Rom. 13:10).
  
- With purity
  - The path of temptation is laid out clearly in Prov. 7. There Solomon describes clearly for his teenage son, how temptation works.
    - The person is naïve. (V. 7)
  
    - They flirt with temptation. (V. 8)
  
    - They are deceptive about it. (V. 9)
  
    - It appeals to their vanity. (V. 15)
  
    - They delight in sensuality. (V. 18)
  
    - They are willing to break God's law to pursue it. (V. 19)
  
    - They are ensnared by it. (V. 22)

- They are hurt by it. (V. 23)
  
- God addresses the sexual side of relationships clearly and often in the NT.
  - “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” (Hebrews 13:4)
  
  - For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. (1 Thess. 4:3-6)
  
  - “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5)
  
  - “Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.” (1 Tim. 5:1-2)
  
- Six reasons why sexual affection outside marriage is unwise:
  - It can lead to further sin.
  
  - It can confuse the woman.
  
  - It makes it difficult to maintain friendship if you have to end the relationship.

- It makes it difficult to hear God's direction.
- It can break down trust even after you're married
- Sexual affection is meant for your spouse. (Heb. 13:4)
  
- With intentionality.
  - What does the other person believe? Why do they believe those things?
  - How well does the other person understand and apply the Gospel?
  - What do they believe about the sovereignty of God? How does it affect the way they live their lives?
  - How strong is their walk with God? Their prayer life? Devotions?
  - How do they think about the church? In what ways do they serve?
  - What major experiences have shaped their life?
  - How do they relate to their family? To others?
  - What do their friends say and think about them?
  - How do they respond to correction? How faithful are they to correct others?

- What are their short term, mid-term, and long term goals?
  
- What do they think about children?
  
- What are their hobbies?
  
- With faith
  - *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Heb. 11:6).*
  
  - *For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin (Rom. 14:23b).*

#### **IV. Engagement – Committed to Marry**

- A man is ready for engagement when he knows he's found the woman he wants to lead, care for, cherish, provide for, and protect for the rest of his life (Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Pet. 3:7; Prov. 5:15-19; Col. 3:19).
  
- A woman is ready for engagement when she knows she's found the man she wants to serve, respect, love, honor, submit to, encourage, and support for the rest of her life (Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Col. 3:18).
  
- Length of engagement can be affected by a number of factors: the maturity of the couple, the history of the relationship, the church and family calendar, the administrative ability of the couple, geographical locations, and more.
  
- Long engagements can introduce potential temptation but aren't morally wrong.
  
- Short engagements aren't morally wrong either. In fact, if a couple has done good research there's no reason for a long engagement.

## V. Marriage – Committed to Fulfill

- Marriage is God’s idea and is to be fulfilled in line with his purposes.
  - The Fall did not alter the Creator’s design or standards for marriage and family, and he still expects these institutions to be marked by monogamy, fidelity, heterosexuality, fertility, complementarity, and durability. (Andreas Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 272).
  
- The first and most clarifying question to ask when attracted to someone of the opposite sex is, “Am I ready to be married?”
  
- What if my child is seeing someone I wouldn’t have approved of?
  - Resist sinful judgment.
  
  - Get to know the individual.
  
  - Talk to your son or daughter about what they find appealing in this person.
  
  - Seek to help them grow in godly discernment.
  
  - Keep the lines of communication and encouragement open.