



"DATING is usually about meeting a **SELFISH NEED**. COURTING is about intentionally building a foundation for **MARRIAGE**."

Dear beloved little sister: ...

Dear beloved little sister: ...

(and other singles guys and ladies of all ages)

[Tips for how to find God's right mate for you, in His timing, and in His Way]

Dear beloved little sister,

It's me, your big bro. :) ~ I just want to say that I sincerely enjoy seeing you read God's Word, study it, compare notes, and share it with your friends! And it also equally delights me to see you growing along with your family, including siblings. And, it brings great joy to my heart to see God so working on you and in you, training you to be a spiritual help and blessing to others over the coming years. I want you to know that you're special to me and are in my prayers daily (*often several times a day or as much as humanly possible*). :) And because I love you, I'm always glad to share things and discuss things that I think will help you to avoid pains that I've been through and that others have shared with me along the way.

You're growing older - how cool :D. Fun stuff, right? Haha... you and I have talked on many occasions how life seems to get more complicated the older we grow. Yes, indeed. But, as I always like to do, I want to make things simple, so you can navigate through them. Sound good? :)

As we've talked over before, I notice that a godly guy or two has caught your eye, because you already caught his. You are indeed growing to be a Godly woman who is respected and admired - and that's always a good thing. But, I would like to give you some encouragements and tips/warning of what may lie ahead, so you can guard your heart from the wrong guys. So, here are a few notes that will help you to sort through the guys over the years, so you can find God's perfect choice for you. :) As you know, I've been in youth ministry for over 14 years, talking with parents and youths, and then young adults, and now all 3 of those groups, as well as parents - sharing tips so

they can train their kiddos well, different from the sin-pain cycles that this world repeats like a merry-go-around. I try always to help people not repeat the same cycle the world pushes as 'fun', as though acting like animals who evolved is fun.. :(Sadly, many forget (sometimes willfully) that God created us and He also wants to teach us how to be like Him *and* how to become partners with Him to teach others His ways here on earth, and to be part of His Future Kingdom of co-heirs and rulers throughout all eternity. How neat that will be! But, for us to get there, we have to grow in Biblical maturity here, as we both know.

So, let me start off by saying that I love your heart for Biblical modesty! That is and always will be beautiful to Godly guys [*though the specifics will need to be taught by Godly ladies* :)]. You are growing well in it - keep it up! And, naturally, Godly and even sensible guys your age notice it too. But, as you and I have talked of lately, figuring out how to handle them can be so hard and confusing... even for older singles. Today's culture makes a mess of Biblical boundaries of all types and stages, not to mention spiritual growth stages too... but, I'm sure we'll discuss those more as we both study God's Word and compare notes over the years. For now, I'd like to just keep on the topic of preparing for marriage at some time in the future.

First with you. You have a wonderful Madre who is teaching you Biblical modesty of the heart, soul, and life - teaching you how to follow the pattern set by God's guidelines in Proverbs 31 as well as many other wonderful examples of Godly women in Scripture [1]. And you need to know that, as long as you continue to grow in those things, people of all ages will value you at a higher level, because of your choice pure and Godly conduct. Keep growing in learning God's ways and making them your own over time, so that they aren't ever a checklist - but personal guidelines your heart follows. That's something we all need to keep our heart growing in :) ~ And, as God continues to teach and lead you, let Him show you things that were once a part of your life but don't need to be anymore - like entertainment that pulls your heart away from following Christ and studying God's Word, or songs that get your heart to desire a guy the wrong way, and books that seek to teach you how to fit the world's mold, instead of God's beautiful ways [2]. I know you know those things and are growing in them - and you know too, so am I. :) ~ So, let's keep growing in them. Keep growing in setting an example (as best as you can) for those of your same age, and those around you, as Paul taught Timothy to do in 2nd Timothy 2. And keep your ears always open to the Godly ladies around you, gleaning what you can from what they share, and always comparing it to God's Word, so as to give you a firm foundation for a lifetime.
>> **1: Sarah, Deborah, Ruth, Esther; as well as Titus 2; Hebrews 11; 1st Peter 3.**
>> **2: Proverbs 6:16-22; 2nd Corinthians 6:14-7:1; James 4:1-4; 1st John 2:15-7; Philippians 4:8; 2nd Peter 1:5-11**

But now, if I may, I want to mention some things about guys. Young men your age are sometimes hard to guess, because the world is also trying to squeeze them always into the same rotten mold for guys, as the world does that for ladies. [3] Please keep one key thing in mind - a rushed marriage is rarely a happy and blessed one. And, something you already know - marriage is for life. So, you want to make sure that you

don't marry any of the wrong ones. If you marry a wrong one, there are still protections you can do, but you really don't want to travel that route. But, also as you know, the divorce rate in the US is very high (*and some of those divorces are right as Jesus explained in Matthew, but sadly many of them are not right...*) Also sadly, much of this broken-family pattern in modern-day America is because the pastors and many other Bible teachers don't teach about Biblical guidelines, Biblical marriage, and Biblical boundaries much anymore and most modern-books and modern-speakers who talk about it are usually only teaching what the world wants to hear: the world's pagan thinking and demonic psychology. Back to the positive though: So, if a guy is worth marrying, he's not going to rush you to make too-quick decisions. He may try to be gently leading you, but he needs to not rush you. And you may need to slow him down if he does try to rush you, or maybe even drop the friendship back down to "just friends" if God shows you concerns that merit such a choice. Watch and pray, and He will lead you. :)

>> **3: Romans 12:1-2 -- "good, acceptable, and perfect will of God..."**

So, let's next discuss the subject of dating vs. courting. I think we'll both find it helpful to review a more Biblical model of dating/courting. Dating, in today's culture - as you know, is more about 'having fun' with someone of the opposite gender than it is about guarding their heart. [4] Modern dating makes an idol out of a relationship and 'hanging out' to be cool with friends [5], rather than actually and genuinely getting to know someone as they are studying, praying, and growing toward marriage [6]. Courting, in today's culture, ranges from as bad as modern-dating, to something wholesome, to a checklist that doesn't make sense... So, I'd like to take a minute to give some ideas of what a Biblical marriage set up should be like.

>> **4: Proverbs 4:23**

>> **5: Mark 12:29-31; 1st John 5:21**

>> **6: Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:1-10**

In God's ways, a Biblical courting relationship doesn't start with the first conversation. Often times, the guy is having to see if the lady is worth continuing a conversation with. And, shortly in, the guy either needs to give the lady space, or verbally initiate a Biblical form of courtship. It doesn't have to be fancy or some exact wording, but it needs to be initiated and that lady has to agree, so that wholesome clarity in the relationship. Unclear communication can cause many headaches and heartaches. Conversation from there needs to be encouraging each other in the Word of God and praying for each other, learning some things about their families, meeting their families, as well as talking about what God is showing each of them as their future goals and dreams, but while leaving secrets alone. I know this world teaches guys and ladies to share everything with their opposite-gender "significant other", but that is very unwise, and it's not guarding one's heart. Some of those things may be properly shared in the engagement stage, but it's best not to share them with a guy you are not engaged to. So, simply put - in review, you want a guy who loves the Bible and the Lord, is growing away from sin-filled entertainment of this world, and one who is clear on where the relationship stands, and verbally initiates and gets your agreement (and that of your parents) to start a Biblical courting relationship, and then if God

shows you and him to proceed and you both agree to it, he will verbally initiate the engagement stage, and then of course make the life-long covenants with you among witnesses. I know we both know this, but I think reviewing it helps: Marrying the wrong one hurts a lot - I've seen far too many examples of painful marriages because of poor Biblical foundation to and through marriage, and I know you have to. But the explanation above gives you a good start on what you can be looking for. And, btw, if a guy you are interested in as being godly does initiate a Biblical courtship, but then (for whatever reason) you both back out of that and settle back as "friends" [7], that is a success - so long as you keep the conversation limited to the type of relationship. Biblical courtship is meant for both Godly guy and Godly lady to assess if the other is God's right one for them, and if not, then to (hopefully politely, but only if possible) part ways and company, waiting and praying for the right one. You may consider having older adopted brothers or even younger ones (in addition to your own siblings) to learn from - but from my experience, you want to be very careful of accepting a brother/sister adopted fellowship with someone your age, so you can guard your heart from a guy who is not interested in you rightly and is not guarding your heart, but just likes to 'hang out'. I've found personally this only leads to pain on both sides. And, (as I've heard from many Godly ladies of a variety of ages), you will want to find nice, polite and direct ways to tell a guy you don't want to continue discussion with him (sometimes). The world pretends that being graciously honest and direct is mean, but those who follow this world are not honest about many things [8]. Guarding your heart is very important, and it's what God tells us to do, and a Godly guy will understand that you need personal space to pray and think sometimes - before and up to marriage, as well as within marriage. The communication between here and up to marriage, often set up some of how the marriage partnership will be run too. So, the setup is **very** important.

>> 7: Quick review of healthy Biblical relationship categories: 1) Husband & Wife, 2) Family, 3) Adopted family, 4) Church of Home-church family, 5) Close friends, 6) Casual friends, 7) Acquaintances, 8) Strangers

>> 8: Romans 1-3 (chapters)

And speaking of setup of a marriage, let's next talk about physical affection before and during marriage. During marriage, God says everything that is mutually agreed upon is fine, since the two (husband and wife) are now one. Together, they will (hopefully) learn what things are helpful for both of them and what things are distracting both of them from their walk with the Lord - but that will need to be a conversation between them, within Biblical marriage. But, Biblical courtship is another thing. in 1st Corinthians 7:1, God explains that physical affection needs to be limited outside of marriage. The text literally notes "touching". Ladies can tend to associate touch with attachment, and yet in the US, sadly, many American guys have been trained to not think that way. So, guard your heart, dear sister - protect yourself so that a guy stay out of your personal space, except where appropriate (family, marriage). Here are some tips that I think singles would do well to do, because keeping these things within good clear healthy guidelines keeps some of the emotional attachment down, until fitting. There are, of course, 4 levels of physical affection between 2 people of the opposite gender: 1) hand-shakes, side-hugs and/or

discreet hugs seem to be one group for normal interaction between everyone from random strangers to good friends, of the opposite genders. 2) discreet kisses seem to be something that some families do, here in the US and around the world. 3) hand-holding and maybe extended side-hugs seem to be the only ones that are fitting, right and safe for the courting/engagement stage. I do realize that some engaged couples may agree to a slight variation from this - that's between them and God. And 4) all other physical affection, including playing with each other's hair, lying down together, full-hugs, kisses on the lips, etc, - those are all fitting only for within a Biblical marriage of a husband and wife. -- So, with this said, some guys don't always stop at the boundaries they should. So, if a guy is not engaged to you, set alerts for yourself where you correct out-of-line stuff, to protect yourself. Some ladies who don't plan this ahead of time get raped, because both guy and lady let their emotions go too far. S*x even between two people who are engaged (and not married yet) will cause only heartache and frustration in marriage. So, don't let a guy you're not married to steal a kiss on the lips or give you a full-hug, etc. Unless they are your husband, they need to be treated as not yet. Hope this makes sense and gives enough clarity and flexibility to give good guidelines. [***1st Corinthians 7 talks mostly to married couples, but verse 1 talks to singles.***]

Next, I'd like to give you some tips on how to identify the type of guy who may be talking in your ear and giving you interest. Let's first look at some negative notes that will give you a quick red-flag or warning signal. There are sometimes (seemingly) little clues that can tell you if a guy is worth your time, or if you need to avoid him at some level. If he makes off-color jokes, including bathroom 'humor', you don't want that kind of guy. If a guy shows you an indecent picture - you don't want that kind of guy. If a guy has a huge temper problem that they mostly hide around you, you don't want them. If a guy has an addiction to something sin-ful or that leads him away from Christ, especially if downplays it or glosses over it, you don't want him. If a guy is trying to control what you do and who you talk to (***outside of a clearly-defined Biblical courting relationship***), you don't want that guy. If a guy is complimenting your clothing or outfit, be very wary. If a guy is complimenting/flattering your body 'form' [***meaning calling you "s*xxy" or *roxy* or *foxy* or similar, or compliments a part of your body***] watch out! [***Drop him immediately, as best as you can. You don't want a guy who's sole or primary basis for marrying you is your outward appearance. If he loves the Lord and your heart - that's good. But if he's vulgar in flatter, you need to run and guard your heart.***] If he is really implying or actually saying that he is lusting after you, that is a guy you **don't** want. If a guy ever talks to you about intimate/s*xual things, you need to not talk to him. That is the type of guy who is trying to draw you with the same sin-lusts he's stuck in. If you find a guy loves porn, you don't want him either. If a guy loves horror films, you don't want him. If a guy loves witchcraft or dragons or "magic", you don't want him. If a guy is a drunkard or a druggee, you don't want him. ~ **You don't want these kinds of guys [9]**, because they are not marriage-for-life material, no matter what they say. -- Now with that list said, I need to note that sometimes a Godly guy may mistakenly say something wrong, or get his words mixed up, or accidentally share a joke or a story or a picture or something he hadn't seen was indecent or ask questions that he shouldn't be asking

about things only married people talk about. If he's a Godly guy who tripped up or stumbled in those things, then a simple correction of that behavior will be met from him with genuine remorse and an apology [10]. But if this guy is intentionally making indecent or perverse humor as a pattern (*or other things above as a pattern*), you know you can't trust him until he grows in Biblical maturity (which for some takes a very long time). There is also one other thing to note here: Some guys, when younger, ask questions or try to understand things that ought to be kept only within marriage, but if they are not taught rightly, they may ask things that they should not, and a simple clear 'no' from you (*as many times as it takes to get the point across*) will tell a Godly guy that he's in an area he should not be in. If that guy pursues this wrong subject matter, then you may need to quickly cut him off from all contact. As you can see, these things aren't as complicated as they may seem. Some of communication is just learning to see wrong-patterns more quickly to protect yourself. Some caring Godly guys learn later how off-track they were and learn to see it through your eyes, and they may be able to be trusted at some level in the future. But a guy who never learns this can never be trusted or he will hurt you (in some way). Those men who walk and talk perversely need to be warned about to others by you and Godly ladies, and me and Godly guys [11]. Going down memory lane: In my youth, I do remember asking some things that I should not have... only to discover years later what I did wrong and to see: *yeah - don't do that again*. [12] Thankfully I had Godly family and people around who prayed that God would teach me and who also explained things as Biblically as they could, because they knew I was a caring growing follower of Christ. And God did grow me - but it took time, prayer and the helpful fellowship of Godly friends and brethren. I'm sure you will find some guys like that who need your prayers for consequences and to learn to shun sin and love God's truth and the healthy fear of the Lord. But, in the meantime, when you find them, you will likely want to/need to hold at a distance until they grow and show signs of Biblical maturity years down the road. [13]

>> 9: Proverbs 5-7, 14, 15, 20, 22; Ephesians 5; 1st Timothy 3 (good basis to judge all Godly guys); Titus 1 and 2; Hebrews 11

>> 10: Proverbs 9:8-11

>> 11: 1st Timothy 5:20 (Some sins need to be rebuked publicly, but at the same time, be very careful not to falsely accuse); Matthew 18:15-17; 1st Corinthians 5

>> 12: Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 22:15 - both of those passages are only talking about Godly caring discipline and teaching, in contrast to the violent abuse of the pagans.

>> 13: 1st John 1:9, 2:12-14, 2:15-17, 4:18; 2nd Peter 1:5-11

Now for some positive things. A Godly guy mostly won't care about what you look like. Attraction is part of courting and marriage, but in Biblical guidelines - lust must be fled from [*for both genders*], so a Godly courting will not focus on that. A Godly guy *will* care about you, your family, your future dreams, and doing ministry for the Lord here on earth, not getting comfortable in chasing the passing pleasures of sin and empty glitter of this world. A Godly guy will care about spending quality time in the Word himself and gently checking that you are spending quality time in God's Word too. A Godly guy knows what diligence is and will care about working hard and be pro-

active in having a job. A Godly guy will have a place for you to stay and/or be pro-actively working toward it. A Godly guy will be working to identify and flee the addictions to sin that his family or friends have/had. A Godly guy will care about having children and raising a family. Most Godly guys want to raise a family, because God puts that in guys hearts often-times, as much as in lady's hearts - but not all guys are raised with this thinking, so that's an iffy, but it will need to be discussed. But, speaking of discussing things, in the courting/engagement stages, you and "he" will need to discuss all of the hard things in life and marriage (ask your family for tips and questions, and ask your Godly friends for tips and suggestions and questions). You will obviously need to keep the subjects discreet, but cover everything of importance in life and marriage and family-raising, and work, and ministry. Talking these things through before marriage has sometimes save a guy and lady from marrying someone who didn't see eye-to-eye and there for were good quality, just not the "right ones" for each other. The reason I mention discussing these things is because it's so easy to fall into the flatter and talk about light stuff - which will of course happen, but some relationships before marriage are only about light and fluffy stuff and/or mostly about light and fluffy stuff - meaning they aren't preparing for marriage, they are just "enjoying each others' company". Biblical courting really does need to be concentrated on guarding each others' hearts and asking questions for marriage, or disconnecting that close-communication back down to a level that befits "just friends" or similar category.[14]

>> **14: 1st Timothy 3; 2nd Timothy 3; Titus 1 and 2**

So, that's probably a headful. Bringing it down to earth again, know this: God has a right guy for you. A simple rule of thumb I tell many of my friends: if you're not ready to get married, then don't handle yourself as though you're available. And, from my experience, those younger than mid-20s wished they had waited and prayed longer before they jumped into marriage, because many of them weren't ready yet, and/or some married the wrong one. ~ So, ask God to get you ready for him and that God will get that guy ready for you. And then ask God to get and keep your hands busy with things He loves and people He loves, and giving you daily wisdom on who to befriend and what level of friendship to give, and who to avoid and how to protect yourself from them. Seek the Lord, dear sister, with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your mind, and all of your strength, and you know He will direct your paths. Let Him teach you how to guard your heart to and through marriage, and He will write your love story. [15]

>> **15: Proverbs 3:5-7; Mark 12:28-34**

One more note before I close - consider buying a purity ring (*It has helped many, including me*). Some things it can help you with: it will keep some guys guessing and will keep some of them from pestering you too much with unwanted interest without commitment. If coupled with a growing maturity of a Godly married-woman (as you glean from the older Godly ladies around you), then in time it will help you become ready for the future one God has for you. And, it can/will be a witness/teaching tool (even a conversation piece) as an outward expression of your inward pledge to your Heavenly Father to be pure to and through marriage. This world needs reminders of

God's pure and lovely standards. Keep making your life one. :) ~ Only drawback I know of is that you have to make sure that you learn to protect that finger so that the ring doesn't get caught on things, and that you set it in a safe place that you can find again, when you take it off. Ask me how I know? :P And, you may consider having a ring for work and a ring for nice - it's a tip that some people find helpful. :)

Well, as you know, I'm proud of you. Keep growing! And, I'm always glad to compare notes and Scriptures. And you are always in my prayers. Let me know your thoughts, okay? Let me know how I can pray, who I can pray for, and what I can help with. My heart and door are open anytime - but you know that :D. I love you very much little sister (but you already know that too)!

As always, *side-hug*
with much brother love,
your big bro, SH (aka Cap)