

The Redeemed Christian Church of God Netherlands.

**TOD Singles & Youth training
Module 2 – Christian Courtship**

Module 2: Christian Courtship

- Definition: A mutual commitment made between a man and a woman, only as a result of knowing God's will for each other, for the purpose of:
 - Getting to know each other & their background better.
 - Preparing themselves for marriage
- It is the period between the time a Christian brother and sister agree to marry each other and the time of their wedding
- Note: until he has proposed to marry you and you have accepted, never assume you are in courtship!
- Texts: Gen. 29:18 – 28, Matt. 1:18-20, Lk. 6:47-49;14:28-34

Dating vs. Courtship

- Most common idea of dating is two people trying out a relationship and exploring whether they're compatible by going out together in public as a couple, who may or may not yet be having sexual relations
- Dating is like marriage, but without the protection! That's the only difference. You relate, spend time together, give your hearts to each other -- with no life-long commitment, with no covenant! And then we wonder why we get hurt!
- Courting should only happen once and ends in a life-long covenant relationship. Dating happens lots of times, and ends in many hurts, heartbreaks, scars, and if you're lucky, a partner that just may stay with you for the next few years, or (if you're really lucky) the rest of your life.

Dating vs. Courtship Cont'd

- In the modern dating scene you usually hide all your faults to give a false impression about yourself, in order to keep your partner liking you. Recreational dating is about self-gratification -- you date to satisfy your own needs.
- Courtship is about open and honest exploration of each others lives and families leading up to engagement and marriage. Courtship is about marriage -- you court in order to see if there is any reason why you shouldn't get married.
- There is difference between dating and relating:
 - maintaining a vital social network of Christian brothers and sisters to ensure balance and growth as against a relationship that provides the 'benefits' of a romantic relationships without the 'boundaries' of a defined, covenantal relationship.
- The church does not support trial marriages or samen wonen

The Problems with Dating – Nathan Bailay

- leads to intimacy but not necessarily to commitment.
- tends to skip the "friendship" stage of a relationship.
- often mistakes a physical relationship for love.
- often isolates a couple from other vital relationships.
- in many cases, distracts young adults from their primary responsibility of preparing for the future.
- can cause discontentment with God's gift of singleness.
- creates an artificial environment for evaluating another person's character.
- develops a self-centered, feeling-oriented concept of love.
- teaches people to break off difficult relationships, conditioning them more for divorce than marriage.
- develops an appetite for variety and change, creating dissatisfaction within marriage.

The Problems with Dating 2 – Nathan Bailay

- causes late marriages, leaving more time for falling into sins associated with singleness.
- promotes lust and moderate sexual activity, opening the door for fornication.
- creates a permanent endorphin-bond between two people who will not spend their lives together.
- creates a standard of comparison by which mates are first chosen, but after marriage rejected.
- lacks the protections and guidance afforded by parental involvement of courtship.
- doesn't prepare children to face "life's realities" -- it warps life's realities!
- devalues sex and marriage.
- destroys fellowship, leaving Christians alienated and ineffective for cooperative ministry.
- embarks on a romantic progression before people are ready to follow through (and commit to marriage)
- encourages short-term relationships over long-term friendships

Purpose of a Christian Courtship

- It is a period of acquaintanceship
 - Know each other as much as possible – personality, family background, past life
 - Discuss various topics and exchange ideas & information – future ambition, leadership ability, ministry etc
 - Get to know/meet people important in each others' lives.
- It is a period of togetherness
 - Do things together
 - Pray, worship, fellowship together
 - Decide, spend, learn new things together
- It is a period to seek knowledge – bible, christian literatures and christian counsellors/pastors
 - Details of marriage and family life
 - God's counsel and principles on marriage
 - Marital roles and responsibilities
 - Christian warfare in marriage

Purpose of a Christian Courtship Con't

- It is a period of effective communication and agreement
 - Attitude to money, discipline, instructions/obedience, correction/disagreement
 - Type of wedding you want, where to live after wedding, church to attend
 - Family size
- It is a period to give and receive
 - test compatibility, adjust and adapt to each other –socially, emotionally, professionally, academically, family status
 - Share things/gifts with each other and people around you
 - Identify with each other publicly
- It is a period to plan for your engagement and wedding ceremonies
 - What do we need, resources – money and people, venue and other details
- Duration of courtship period: no time specified in scripture
 - Isaac & Rebecca (Gen. 24:62-67), Jacob & Rachael (Gen.29:18-28)
 - 2 years recommended except for sickness or parental objection

Possible Obstacles during Christian Courtship

- Parental Objection
 - Should not be ignored or rationalized, get consent prior to marriage
 - Do not be discouraged, confused or offended; remain in agreement
 - Use period to examine and reconfirm your convictions/God's leading
 - Take case up with God. This is a matter of trust -- is God in control of your world, or her parents? If you truly believe in a sovereign God who answers prayer, then this presents no problem at all!
 - Seek counsel from your spiritual authority/Pastor
- Distance – when intending couple live apart from each other
 - *Thanks to technology! Stay in touch as often as possible*
 - *Make your status known to all around you*
- Past relationship – *discuss with a marriage counselor or pastor*
- Terminal illness, accidents

Conduct during Christian Courtship

- Keep yourself pure – 1 Cor.3:16;6:18;Heb.13:4
 - Neither courtship nor engagement is equivalent to marriage
 - Sexual sin is a cankerworm, destroys foundation and structure of family
 - Careless touching, caressing, other forms of romancing are danger signs
- Do not toy with each other's emotions, overstate your strength
- When together, find something to do. Avoid lonely places
- Sisters need to be firm. Brothers are moved by sight
- Be honest with each other when under increasing emotional tension or pulls towards each other
- Dress and act decently towards each other
- Do not share same room/live together

Where mighty anointed men have fallen, tread cautiously!

Warning Signals Worth Paying Attention

- Fear and loss of peace of mind
- Lack of love and affection
- When lust is in control (always touching, kissing, petting, sexual sin)
- Do not marry out of sheer respect – no freedom of expression
- Never marry out of pity – reduces your personality
- When your partner becomes indifferent or spiritually cold
- When giving is one-sided (love, care, resources etc)
- Inability to build together – always quarreling, disagreeing and provoking each other.

Do not marry without resolving the issues above!

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Causes of Broken Courtship/Engagement



- Impatience
- Intolerance
- Misunderstanding
- Unforgiving spirit
- Disagreement
- Incompatibility
- Lust
- Undue familiarity with each other or with another of the opposite sex
- Inconsistency
- Immaturity
- Prayerlessness
- Sexual sin
- Frequent disappointments
- Parental objection
- Lengthy courtship
- Self centeredness
- Pride
- Lack of effective communication

Final words



- When at crossroads:
 - Pray again and reassess your convictions. If you are convinced otherwise, share with your pastor/marriage counselor
 - Prayerfully share with your partner and determine to separate in true love and forgiveness
- Stand by your words
 - Better not to say “I will marry you” than to promise and fail. Do not be hasty in your decision.
 - Do everything to stand by your words – Matt 5:37, Col.3:8-9, Eccl.5:2

Do not use each other as spare tires, God will not hold you guiltless for every heart of His child you willfully break!

Reference Materials

- To Have & To Hold Forever – RCCG Marriage Counseling handbook
- Christian Courtship: Articles and Resources – Nathan Bailey
<http://polynate.net/books/courtship/>
- Wikipedia