What the Bible says about…
Courtship & Marriage

1. Teach your children the basic virtuous characteristics that will <u>prepare</u> them for courtship and marriage.

Teach your teenagers about:

a. Genuine <u>love</u> (I Cor. 13)
b. Accepting God's <u>timing</u> and <u>will</u> (Gen. 29:20; Prov. 3:5-6; Ja. 4:15)
c. The importance of <u>good friendships</u> (I Cor. 15:33)
d. <u>Priorities</u> (Mt. 6:33)
   Parents must explain to their teen what to look for in a mate.
   --Godliness over glamour
   --Personal character is priority over personal appearance
   (Prov. 31:30)
e. Design for <u>sex</u> in <u>marriage</u> and standards of <u>moral purity</u>
   (I Thess. 4:1--8; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7:1-5; Prov. 5:18-21; Ps. 101:3)

2. Teach your children about <u>proper courtship</u>:

What procedure should Christian girls follow in a courtship relationship?

1) Remember you are under the authority of your father until you marry (I Cor. 7:36-38).

2) Before starting to date, meet with your father (whether or not he is a Christian) and share with him your goals for marriage: that yours will be the kind of marriage God wants, and thus be the happiest possible.

3) Agree that any boy who wants to date you must first ask your father for permission.

   a) It makes the boy appreciate you more because what is easily gotten is not usually appreciated.

   b) It decreases the temptation of the boy to mistreat you. If he thinks you are completely on your own, it increases the risk that he will try something.

   c) It proves to the boy that your father loves you.

   d) It gives your father a chance to discern the boy's intentions. A woman is more affected by actions than by motives, but a man discerns first the motive.

   e) It places the boy under your father's counsel, which is exactly where he should be if the relationship grows into marriage.

4) Agree that anytime a fellow starts talking to you about marriage you will say, *"If you are thinking about marriage, you had better talk to my father."* This is tremendously important because so often talk about marriage is just camouflaged lust.

3. Teach your children about discerning God's will.

How can your children know who is the right one for marriage?

Follow God's principles for courtship:

a. Be submitted and obedient to the advice and discretion of your parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

b. Determine that you will "date" only Christians (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18). God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

c. Determine that you will strive to be the right one, rather than focusing on meeting the "right one" (Rom. 12:1-2).

d. Be busy doing the general will of God, and He will guide you in the specifics of His will (Phil. 2:12-13; Prov. 3:5-6).

e. Purpose in your heart that you will not defile yourself or defraud the one you date (I Cor. 7:1-2; I Th. 4:6).

f. Decide that the one you marry must enhance your ministry, not diminish or destroy it (Is she a "helpmeet" [Gen. 2:18] or a hindrance?).

g. Yield your plans to God's will in the vital area of courtship and marriage (desire His will above all else) (Mt. 6:33).

h. Wait for God's timing (Eccl. 3:1). Patience is a key virtue. It requires absolute trust in God and His timing.

4. Teach your children what to avoid in a dating relationship.

a. Avoid the "steady" relationship until the time is right.
(Have several friends and let God bring the right one alone in His time)

b. Avoid situations and circumstances that might involve temptations and trouble (don't be alone in secluded places).

c. Avoid physical involvement (lust can't wait until marriage; but true love can).